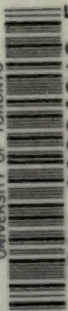


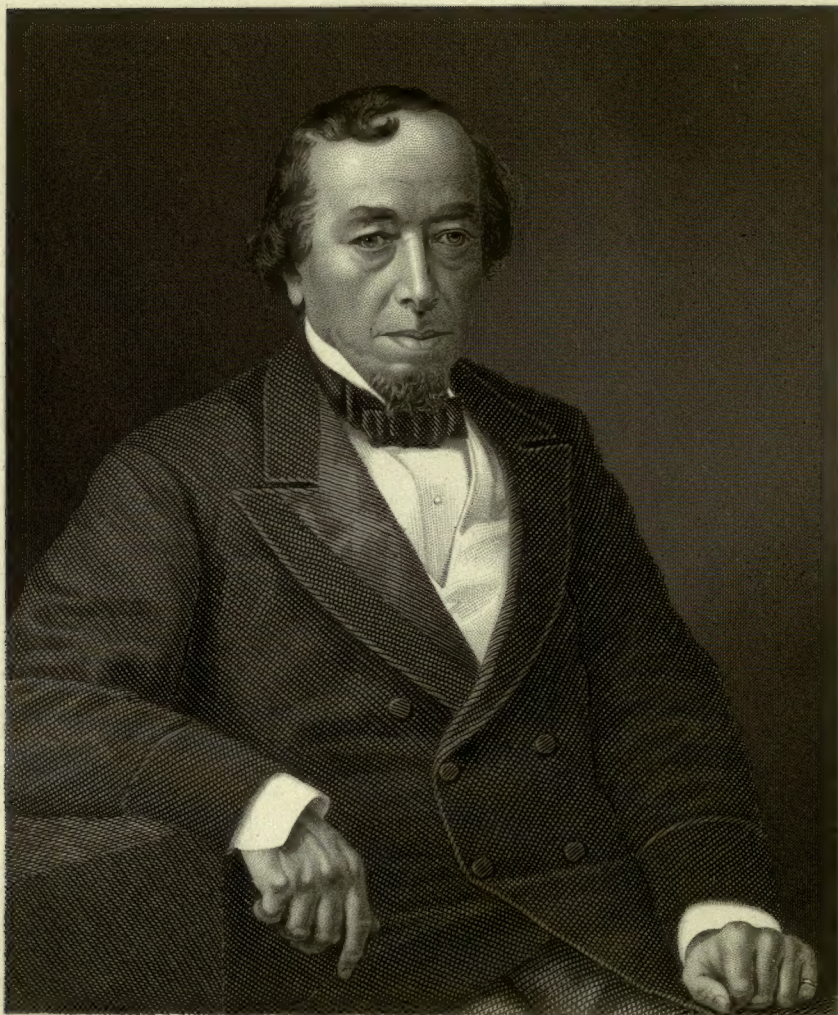
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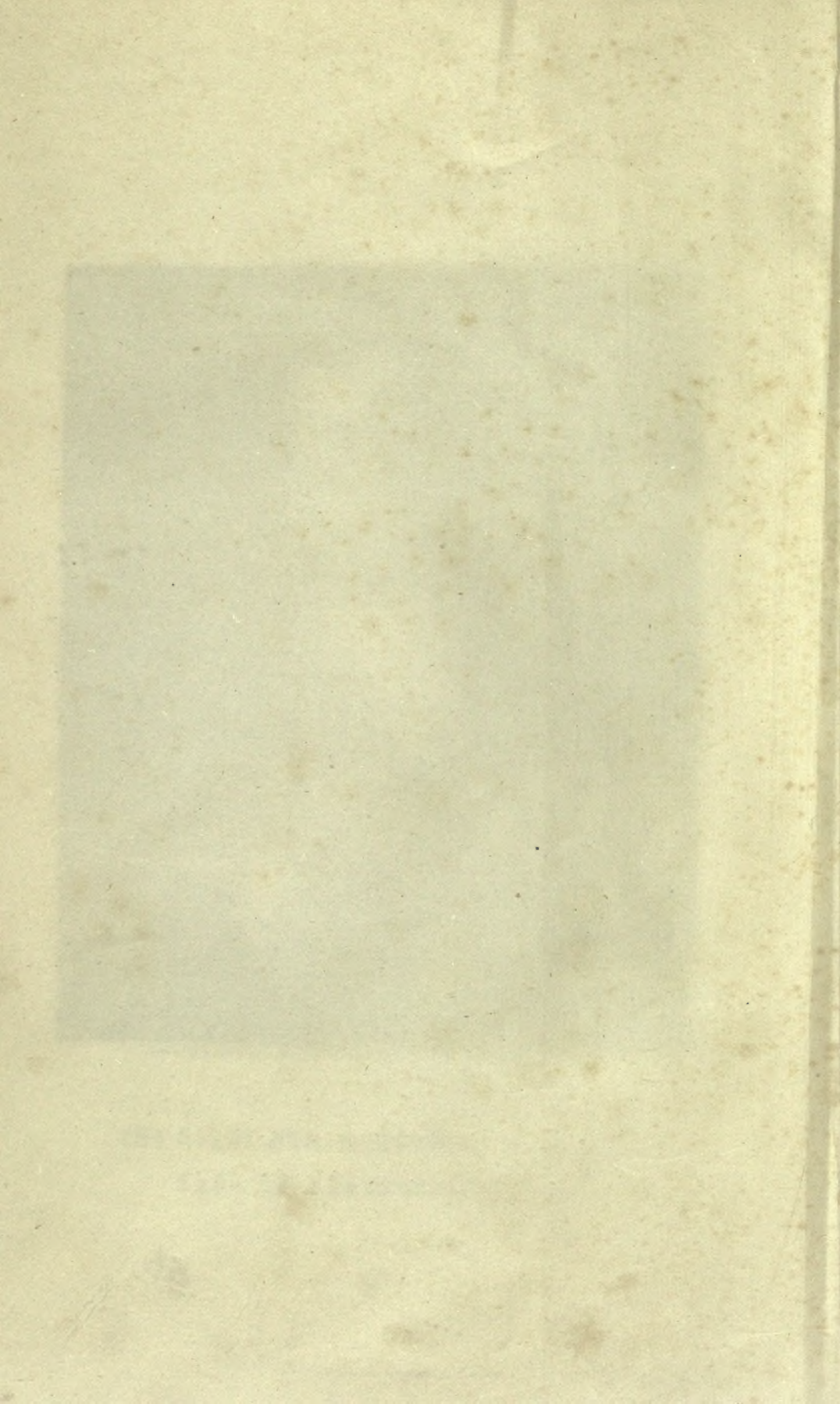
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Engraved by W. Roffe, from a Photograph by Jabez Hughes, taken by command of 'H.M. the Queen.

THE RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K. G.



THE
RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI,
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G.,
AND HIS TIMES.

BY

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CHARLES STUART;" "REPRESENTATIVE STATESMEN," ETC., ETC.

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THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD, K.G., AND HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

"DISRAELI THE YOUNGER."

ON the bead-roll of English statesmen the name of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, will only cease to occupy the foremost position when English politics have no further existence. Born to none of those advantages which his predecessors in office enjoyed, he owed the brilliant name he made for himself, and the lofty post he gained with its splendid tenure of power, alone to those rich intellectual gifts which render their possessor independent of the glamour of birth or the favours of fortune. At the outset of his career every obstacle that impediment could devise barred the path of his advancement to the position he subsequently attained, of leader of the English landed interest, and as a potent authority in the councils of Europe. He bore a foreign name; in his veins flowed the blood of a then despised and outcast race; though not poor, his means were too slender to offer any compensation for the disadvantages under which he laboured; he had passed through none of that social preparatory training—boyhood at a public school, manhood at a university—which generally qualifies the English gentleman ambitious of

parliamentary honours; yet ignored, friendless, and the constant butt of all the ridicule and sarcasm that the most venomous malice could inspire, he rose to heights such as Burke had never dreamed of, and swayed a power such as neither Walpole nor the second Pitt had ever exercised. Conscious of the immense talents working within him, quick-sighted as well as far-sighted, a keen judge of character and of the weakness of an enemy's position, with the mordant wit of a Parisian, with all the resources of a complete master of language, and with that exquisite tact which instinctively knows how to make the most of a victory and the least of a defeat, he waited with the patience which is in itself one of the most characteristic signs of great genius, for the moment when his opportunity should come, and the tide, taken at the flood, should bear him on to fortune. In the feverish, harassing struggle of party politics he was always so cool and collected that those who knew not the man said he was indifferent to the conflict around him; whilst the real truth was that his well-balanced judgment was superior to those passions of

the hour which always affect and irritate the shallow and superficial, but leave calm and unruffled the depths of the really great mind. He ran a waiting race; never exhausting himself by futile efforts which might distress and retard him, but keeping his powers well within their grasp, steadily, almost imperceptibly, he drew away from his competitors, until at the supreme moment when called upon by genius, he put forth all his strength and reached the goal a winner, so decided and complete as to leave his victory an event without parallel in the annals of parliamentary triumphs. Criticising Lord Beaconsfield's career from its beginning to its close, we may say that never did ambition seem more hopeless, never was its realization more complete.

In any other profession save that of politics, the success attained by the late Lord Beaconsfield would not have been so singularly remarkable. Men from the most humble surroundings have risen to the serene heights of the bench, have worn the lawn sleeves of the episcopate, have wielded the bâton of the field-marshal, have been created peers for famous achievements. The great prizes of the bar, the church, the queen's services are open to all; and though certain social advantages have, in the different professions, their full value, yet such advantages at the best but give the candidate a good start, and by no means promise him a success positive and assured. Talent, industry, and sound knowledge seldom fail to meet with their deserts in a professional career, whilst factitious combinations only occasionally prosper. With parliamentary life it is very different. To become the head of a great party, to command an obedient and united following, to dominate over the jealousies and spontaneous antipathies of the House of Commons, to be supreme in the council chamber, and to enjoy the confidence both of your sovereign and your country, something more than great abilities have generally been necessary. A lofty name, a

splendid rent-roll, the gifts which captivate what is termed society, have usually been the privileges which surrounded him who held the seals as prime minister. If we look down the list of our English premiers—from Sir Robert Walpole, who was the first to found the office, to its present holder—we shall find that the position and power enjoyed by Lord Beaconsfield are unique. There have been men whom party jealousies have placed at the head of cabinets, and who—mere puppets—were content to act as rival candidates chose to pull the strings; there have been men who have undertaken to form a ministry, simply and solely on account of their illustrious lineage and vast possessions; there have been men raised to supreme power, not because they possessed the confidence of either house of parliament, or because they were beloved by the country, but only because they were the cherished favourites of the sovereign; and again, there have been men who, from comparatively lowly origin, have attained to the position of chief of the cabinet. Yet in none of these instances is there a parallel to the case of Lord Beaconsfield. Walpole maintained his power by judicious distribution of the guineas of the treasury; Newcastle was a simpleton whose dukedom, wealth, and votes in the lower house compensated for his incapacity, and kept him in office; Bute was the pet of the court, and the hated of the people; Addington, Portland, and Perceval were political mediocrities who owed their elevation to the jealousies of the hour. Canning, sneered at as an adventurer, found when he had been appointed to form an administration, that a proud aristocracy declined to obey him. In the political history of Lord Beaconsfield we find, it is true, some of the elements which assisted or hampered his predecessors, but nothing in them sufficiently marked and cohesive as to form a parallel to his exceptional career. In the tactics of parliamentary strategy he was as consummate a master as either Sir Robert Walpole or Sir Robert Peel. Though not unpopular with the people, he cannot be

said to have been, in the fullest acceptation of the word, popular; yet Bute never enjoyed a more cordial and decided support from the court. At no time, however necessary his name might have become to his party, would he have consented—as Portland and Perceval had consented—to have been the chief of a cabinet in which he was not permitted to be dominant and absolute. “When Lord Beaconsfield speaks,” said Prince Bismarck, referring to the distinguished envoy to the Berlin congress, “he does not speak as one of the members of an English cabinet, but as *the* cabinet: he is England.” Like Addington and Canning, the birth of Lord Beaconsfield was not in the minds of the vulgar beyond reproach; yet unlike in their case, the haughtiest aristocracy and the pink of the most prejudiced gentry in Europe gladly enrolled themselves under his banner, and carried out his behests. What, then, we may ask, were the gifts and fascinations with which this extraordinary man was endowed, that he should have succeeded where so brilliant a man as Canning had failed; that he should have enjoyed a reputation on the continent such as Lord Palmerston in his most spirited moments never held; that, sprung from a stock the be-fouled and persecuted of centuries, he should have been the chief favourite in the most exclusive coteries of society, and that he exercised a command over his following which was never disputed except to be instantly repented of? In the following biography we hope to answer these queries.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI was born, it is said,

* The precise year of his birth is uncertain, some giving it as 1805, and others as 1806; but the general impression appears to be that he was born in 1804. In the inscription upon his coffin the date of his birth was omitted, owing to the inability of the executors to discover any authentic record on the point. On the page of the register in the Registry

Office in East Chapel Street, Mayfair, the name of Lord Beaconsfield is entered as ‘aged 76,’ which makes the year of his birth 1805; but, on the other hand, the following entry from the register of the synagogue in Bevis Marks is too important to be ignored:—

December 24, 1804,* and, as is well known from the publicity he gave to the fact, and the pride he took in his descent, was sprung from Jewish parents. In the interesting introduction to the works of his father he gives us a sketch of his family history, which will well repay perusal. “My grandfather,” he writes, “who became an English denizen in 1748, was an Italian descendant from one of those Hebrew families whom the Inquisition forced to emigrate from the Spanish peninsula at the end of the fifteenth century, and who found a refuge in the more tolerant territories of the Venetian republic. His ancestors had dropped their Gothic surname on their settlement in the Terra Firma; and grateful to the God of Jacob who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and guarded them through unheard-of perils, they assumed the name of ‘Disraeli,’ a name never borne before or since by any other family, in order that their race might be for ever recognized. Undisturbed and unmolested, they flourished as merchants for more than two centuries under the protection of the lion of St. Mark, which was but just, as the patron saint of the republic was himself a child of Israel. But towards the middle of the eighteenth century the altered circumstances of England, favourable, as it was then supposed, to commerce and religious liberty, attracted the attention of my great-grandfather to this island, and he resolved that the youngest of his two sons, Benjamin, the ‘son of his right hand,’ should settle in a country where the dynasty seemed at length established, through the recent

Office in East Chapel Street, Mayfair, the name of Lord Beaconsfield is entered as ‘aged 76,’ which makes the year of his birth 1805; but, on the other hand, the following entry from the register of the synagogue in Bevis Marks is too important to be ignored:—

Child's Name.	Father's Name.	Mother's Name.	Surname.	Day in Week of Child's Birth.	Jewish Date.	Christian Era.	Circumcised by	Attested by
Benjamin.	Isaac.	Maria.	D'Israeli.	Friday.	19 Tebet, 5565.	21 December, 1804.	D. A. Lindo, 26 Tebet, 5565.	D. J. De Castro.

failure of Prince Charles Edward, and where public opinion appeared definitively adverse to persecution on matters of creed and conscience.

"The Jewish families who were then settled in England were few, though, from their wealth and other circumstances, they were far from unimportant. They were all of them Sephardim, that is to say, children of Israel, who had never quitted the shores of the Midland Ocean until Torquemada had driven them from their pleasant residences and rich estates in Arragon, and Andalusia, and Portugal, to seek greater blessings, even than a clear atmosphere and a glowing sun, amid the marshes of Holland and the fogs of Britain. Most of these families, who held themselves aloof from the Hebrews of northern Europe, then only occasionally stealing into England, as from an inferior caste, and whose synagogue was reserved only for Sephardim,* are now extinct; while the branch of the great family, which, notwithstanding their own sufferings from prejudice, they had the hardihood to look down upon, have achieved an amount of wealth and consideration which the Sephardim, even with the patronage of Mr. Pelham, never could have contemplated. Nevertheless, at the time when my grandfather settled in England, and when Mr. Pelham, who was very favourable to the Jews, was Prime Minister, there might be found, among other Jewish families flourishing in this country, the Villa Reals, who brought wealth to these shores almost as great as their name, though that is the second in Portugal, and who have twice allied themselves with the English aristocracy, the Medinas—the Laras, who were our kinsmen—and the Mendez da Costas, who, I believe, still exist.

* The Jews are divided into two religious communities—the *Ashkenasim* or orthodox Jews, and the *Sephardim*, or Spanish or Portuguese Jews. Both these communities are distinct over the whole world. In the essentials of Judaism they both agree, but in their ritual they slightly differ. In England, since 1841, a third community has been established, called the Reformed Jews, who deny the authority of the Talmud, and acknowledge only one law—the sacred volume of the Scriptures.

"Whether it were that my grandfather, on his arrival, was not encouraged by those to whom he had a right to look up,—which is often our hard case in the outset of life,—or whether he was alarmed at the unexpected consequences of Mr. Pelham's favourable disposition to his countrymen in the disgraceful repeal of the Jew Bill, which occurred a very few years after his arrival in this country, I know not; but certainly he appears never to have cordially or intimately mixed with his community. This tendency to alienation was, no doubt, subsequently encouraged by his marriage, which took place in 1765. My grandmother, the beautiful daughter of a family who had suffered much from persecution, had imbibed that dislike for her race which the vain are too apt to adopt when they find that they are born to public contempt. The indignant feeling that should be reserved for the persecutor, in the mortification of their disturbed sensibility, is too often visited on the victim; and the cause of annoyance is recognized not in the ignorant malevolence of the powerful, but in the conscientious conviction of the innocent sufferer. Seventeen years, however, elapsed before my grandfather entered into this union, and during that interval he had not been idle. He was only eighteen when he commenced his career, and when a great responsibility devolved upon him. He was not unequal to it. He was a man of ardent character; sanguine, courageous, speculative, and fortunate; with a temper which no disappointment could disturb, and a brain, amid reverses, full of resource. He made his fortune in the midway of life, and settled near Enfield, where he formed an Italian garden, entertained his friends, played whist with Sir Horace Mann, who was his great acquaintance, and who had known his brother at Venice as a banker, eat macaroni which was dressed by the Venetian consul, sang canzonettas, and notwithstanding a wife who never pardoned him for his name, and a son who disappointed all his plans, and who to the last

hour of his life was an enigma to him, lived till he was nearly ninety, and then died in 1817, in the full enjoyment of prolonged existence."

This son "who disappointed all his plans" was Isaac Disraeli, the author of "Curiosities of Literature" and other works enjoying a considerable reputation in their day, but which they have since been unable to sustain. He appears, from the account furnished us by his son, to have been a somewhat moody recluse, with all the absent and unpractical habits of the typical man of letters. "He was," writes Mr. Disraeli, "a complete literary character, a man who really passed his life in his library. Even marriage produced no change in these habits; he rose to enter the chamber where he lived alone with his books, and at night his lamp was ever lit within the same walls. Nothing, indeed, was more remarkable than the isolation of this prolonged existence; and it could only be accounted for by the united influence of three causes: his birth, which brought him no relations or family acquaintance, the bent of his disposition, and the circumstance of his inheriting an independent fortune, which rendered unnecessary those exertions that would have broken up his self-reliance. He disliked business, and he never required relaxation; he was absorbed in his pursuits. In London his only amusement was to ramble among booksellers; if he entered a club, it was only to go into the library. In the country, he scarcely ever left his room but to saunter in abstraction upon a terrace, muse over a chapter, or coin a sentence. He had not a single passion or prejudice: all his convictions were the result of his own studies, and were often opposed to the impressions which he had early imbibed. He not only never entered into the politics of the day, but he could never understand them. He never was connected with any particular body or set of men, comrades of school or college, or confederates in that public life which, in England, is, perhaps, the only foundation of real friendship. In

the consideration of a question, his mind was quite undisturbed by traditionary preconceptions; and it was this exemption from passion and prejudice which, although his intelligence was naturally somewhat too ingenious and fanciful for the conduct of close argument, enabled him, in investigation, often to show many of the highest attributes of the judicial mind, and particularly to sum up evidence with singular happiness and ability."

Early in the year 1802 Isaac Disraeli married a Miss Basevi, the sister of George Basevi, the celebrated Jewish architect who designed, amongst other erections, the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and the Conservative Club in St. James' Street. Many distinguished men have been indebted in no small measure for the fame they obtained in after life to the judicious and sympathetic supervision of a mother of a superior mental calibre; but Mrs. Disraeli, it would appear, was an ordinary, common-place woman, whose character does not call for any particular comment. Her son, who talks much of the "philosophic sweetness" of the disposition of his father, of his "singular volubility," his amiability, his personal appearance, and the charms of his conversation, scarcely alludes to the name of his mother, which, we think, would not have been the case (since it was characteristic of the man not to be reticent concerning his affection to those to whom he was attached) had she exercised any great influence upon his career. Of this marriage four children were the result. Sarah, the only daughter, was born December 6, 1802; Benjamin, the late earl of Beaconsfield, as we have said, December 21, 1804; Ralph, in 1809; and James, in 1813. Modern Judaism, lacking its sacred Temple, and consequently deprived of the very vitality of its religion—the sacrificial system—is fast losing its distinctive characteristics; it is gradually developing into a deism, differing only from pure deism inasmuch as it is warped and coloured by the prejudices of race. The modern Jew, cultivated and un-

restricted, chooses the profession he thinks most suited to his abilities, rises rapidly in it, and mixes freely, if it will permit him, with the society of the country of his adoption. The precepts of the Talmud and the lore of the rabbis sit lightly upon him, and save when, owing to the result of hereditary influences, he observes in all its strictness the solemn day of atonement, he seldom enters his synagogue. He lives very much as those who are of a different faith around him; the particular precepts, which enjoin him to eschew certain articles of food, and the dishes prepared by those not of his own race, are far more honoured in the breach than in the observance; if his affections are engaged, and such union is calculated to advance his social interests, he marries a dame who worships the hated Christ of his ancestors; he changes his name if the patronymic be gratingly Hebraic; and if nature had not stamped them indelibly upon the physiognomy of his race, he would have no objection to change his features. Were it not for the peculiar cast of countenance which proclaims his nationality, one would not, from the circumstances of his life, the tendencies of his opinions, or the maintenance of his establishment, look upon him as being in any way different from his neighbours. Modern Judaism is now but a mechanical creed, and, since its animating spirit is extinct, it cannot be expected to possess much influence upon its followers. It has lost much, and is daily losing more, of its hold upon its people. To its ethnological character, and not to its religious, Judaism owes its continued existence.

Isaac Disraeli, a man of culture and research, was a Jew only in name. The legends of the Talmud, the absurd ceremonies commanded by the synagogue on certain special occasions, and the restrictions as to diet, ablutions, and service imposed upon a nation no longer secluded and excluded, were eminently distasteful to his intelligence and to the philosophical liberality of his sentiments. He gradually

alienated himself from those of his own faith. "It is evident," he wrote, as an excuse for severing himself from the religious services of his people, "to all men but Hebrews, who still cling to the ignorant pride of a semi-civilized race, that a considerable portion of the Mosaic code could not be designed for perpetuity, but was accommodated to immediate purposes. Many laws, therefore, have fallen extinct with their objects. The motives which induced Moses to forbid the eating of pork, of shellfish, and other aliments, no longer prevail in another climate, and among a race who are not idolaters. Ordinances relating to the seven Canaanitish nations could only be absolute while those hordes existed. Customs of the East, prescribed as religious rites—frequent ablutions, and living in bowery tabernacles in the chill of autumn—would not have been commanded in the cold or even in the temperate zones. The laws are not perpetual which relate to certain contagious maladies which have disappeared, while other prevalent diseases have arisen, for which Moses could provide no laws. Would the Hebrew at this day inflict punishments peculiar to the East because they are decreed by the Mosaic code? The whole constitution of Israel has passed away; the sacrifice and the sacrificer have vanished; the altar sunk with the throne. A conquered people ridiculously exist, as if they were in a state independent, amidst the miseries and degradations of twenty centuries." Maintaining these views, it was inevitable that disputes should arise between Isaac Disraeli and the leading members of his faith. As a man of distinction among his set, he was elected to fill the post of warden of the Bevis Marks synagogue; he declined the honour in, it must be admitted, a singularly offensive and irritating letter; he was fined, and he refused to pay the fine; then to complete the separation he wrote that he was "under the painful necessity" of taking his name off the list of contributing members to the synagogue. Meanwhile, he had so far conformed to the discipline of his church as

to allow his children to undergo that peculiar operation, which is, not to jar upon ears polite, called the "initiatory Abrahamic rite."* From recent investigations made by the curious, we learn that Benjamin Disraeli was circumcised by one Daniel Abarbanel Lindo, a connection of the family, and a Portuguese merchant of high standing.

Shortly after resigning his membership as one of the congregation of Bevis Marks synagogue, Isaac Disraeli, at the instigation, it is alleged, of Samuel Rogers, the poet, gave his consent to his son Benjamin being admitted into the Christian church. The following entry can be seen on the baptismal register of St. Andrew's, Holborn:—

"ENTRY OF BAPTISM, ST. ANDREW'S, HOLBORN. July 31, 1817—Benjamin, s^d to be about twelve years old, son of Isaac and Maria D'Israeli (former described as gentleman), residing at King's R^d—Officiating clergyman, Rev. J. Thimbleby."

The author of the "Curiosities of Literature" was at that time living in King's Road, Bedford Row, in order to be near the library of the British Museum, which he then constantly frequented for the better prosecution of the literary pursuits in which he was engaged. On the death of his father, Isaac Disraeli succeeded to a comfortable fortune, and, being now in good circumstances, removed to a house in the then not unfashionable quarter of Bloomsbury Square. Here he remained during the years 1817-25, when he became the proprietor of a small country seat in Buckinghamshire, "the county of statesmen"†—the Bradenham House so familiar to all who have read the early pam-

phlets and election addresses of "Disraeli the younger." He died January 19, 1848, after attaining to the ripe old age of eighty-two. On a little hill near Hughenden Manor a column has been erected to his memory, which bears this inscription:—

"In memory of Isaac Disraeli, of Bradenham House, in this county, Esquire, and Honorary D.C.L. of the University of Oxford, who, by his happy genius, diffused amongst the multitude that elevating taste for literature which, before his time, was the privilege only of the learned. This monument was erected by Mary Anne, the wife of his eldest son, the Right Honourable B. Disraeli, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1852, 1858-9, Lord of this Manor, and now for the sixth time Knight of this Shire."

We have entered into some detail with regard to the parentage of the illustrious statesman who is the subject of this political biography, because we have always considered that to the peculiar circumstances of his birth much of the strength and a little of those weaknesses conspicuous in his character and career can be traced. The mental constitution of Benjamin Disraeli was in all its characteristics essentially Hebraic, and only on those few occasions when his acts and aspirations had been tempered and repressed by the influences of a polished Western civilization, did it partake of the English nature. He had that intense individuality peculiar to the Hebrews, which made every question he took up especially his own, and of setting it—witness his teaching as to the Venetian constitution and parliamentary reform—in an entirely new light. He held that the progress of human affairs was almost exclusively influenced by the characters of individual men, and little by the operation of those general laws in which the author of the "History of Civilization" was so firm a believer. "Everywhere," he writes in "Coningsby," "you see the influence of the individual. God made man in His own image; but the public is made by newspapers, members of parliament, excise officers, poor law guardians. Would Philip have succeeded if Epaminondas had not

* The second of the 613 Precepts which all Jewish children, between six and seven years of age, have to commit to memory, as a thorough knowledge of these is considered to be a key to the Oral Law, commands all Hebrews "To circumcise male children on the eighth day after their birth; for it is written, 'This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised.'"—*Genesis* xvii. 10.

† "The county of Buckinghamshire has supplied this house with a series of statesmen than whom no body of men have more contributed to create the empire, sustain the renown, and cherish the high spirit of the English people. You may smile, remembering only the uninfluential person who now addresses you; but I was thinking of those days when the county of Buckingham gave to the House of Commons Mr. Hampden and the Grenvilles, the elder Pitt and Mr. Burke."—*Speech of Mr. Disraeli on National Representation*, June 20, 1848.

been slain? And if Philip had not succeeded? Would Prussia have existed had Frederick not been born? And if Frederick had not been born? What would have been the fate of the Stuarts if Prince Henry had not died, and Charles I., as was intended, had been Archbishop of Canterbury?"

In this teaching we plainly see the influence of his Hebrew origin. At no time had the various forms of unbelief, now so fashionable in intellectual quarters, any attractions for him: he was always, as he frankly admitted, "on the side of the angels." He never doubted the reality of the Jewish theocracy; he was a firm believer in the divinity of the dispensation which succeeded it. The most bigoted Jew could not have been more impressed with the conviction that "the world had from time to time been under the immediate and direct government of the Supreme Being, holding personal communication with His earthly representatives, and investing them with power to control the march of events and to mould the destinies of mankind." Like the prophets of old he believed he was under the especial protection of the Most High, and that it was his mission to regenerate the condition of his country. With the intense egotism and self-reliance of the Hebrew, he believed in himself and in the superiority of the race from which he was sprung. Unlike many men of his own nationality, who, when they have attained to fame, carefully shun all allusions to their origin, Benjamin Disraeli gave every prominence to the fact. It was his belief in his race that made him believe in himself; it was because he could lay claims to a descent which made the pedigree of the proudest Norman baron but a creation of yesterday, that rendered him superior to all feelings of social inferiority, and caused him to regard his position as the political leader of the English gentry as one which he was fully entitled to hold. He who led an exclusive order must himself belong to an exclusive order. A man who was of the same family

to which it had pleased the Son of God, in His infinite condescension, to attach Himself, had no reason to be ashamed of his birth, or to yield precedence to the haughtiest English peer.* The Jews only, according to Benjamin Disraeli, can mark out a lineage which, in its original history, is without a parallel. Speaking through the fictitious Sidonia (supposed to be a portrait of himself, and the expounder of his own views) in his novel of "Coningsby," he thus eloquently discourses upon his favourite topic:—"Sidonia was well aware that in the five great varieties into which physiology has divided the human species—to wit, the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the Malayan, the American, the Ethiopian—the Arabian tribes rank in the first and superior class, together, among others, with the Saxon and the Greek. This fact alone is a source of great pride and satisfaction to the animal Man. But Sidonia and his brethren could claim a distinction which the Saxon and the Greek, and the rest of the Caucasian nations, have forfeited. The Hebrew is an unmixed race. Doubtless, among the tribes who inhabit the bosom of the Desert, progenitors alike of the Mosaic and the Mohammedan Arabs, blood may be found as pure as that of the descendants of the Scheik Abraham. But the Mosaic Arabs are the most ancient, if not the only, unmixed blood that dwells in cities. "An

* It was surely from no feeling of false shame as to his name and origin that prompted him to insert the following clause in his will. He had no desire, like many a modern Jew, who hopes by calling himself Howard, or Cholmondeley, or Buckingham de Bohun, to hide his nationality, that the name of Disraeli should be lost in that of Beaconsfield:—"Provided always, and I hereby expressly declare it as my wish, although I abstain from attaching any penalty to the non-performance of this direction, that every person who under this my will shall become entitled as tenant for life or as tenant in tail male to the actual possession, or to the receipt of the rents and profits of the said premises (the manor of Hughenden) hereinbefore devised in strict settlement, and who shall not then use and bear the surname of Disraeli, shall within one year after he or she shall become so entitled; and also that every person whom any woman so becoming entitled shall marry, shall within one year after such woman shall so become entitled or shall marry, whichever of such events shall last happen (unless in the said respective cases any such person shall be prevented by death), take upon himself or herself, and use in all deeds and writings which he or she shall sign, and upon occasions *the surname of Disraeli only, and not together with his or her own family surname.*"

unmixed race of a first-rate organization are the aristocracy of Nature. Such excellence is a positive fact; not an imagination, a ceremony, coined by poets, blazoned by cozening heralds, but perceptible in its physical advantages, and in the vigour of its unsullied idiosyncrasy. In his comprehensive travels, Sidonia had visited and examined the Hebrew communities of the world. He had found, in general, the lower orders debased, the superior immersed in sordid pursuits; but he perceived that the intellectual development was not impaired. This gave him hope. He was persuaded that organization would outlive persecution. When he reflected on what they had endured, it was only marvellous that the race had not disappeared. They had defied exile, massacre, spoliation, the degrading influence of the constant pursuit of gain; they had defied Time. For nearly 3000 years, according to Archbishop Usher, they have been dispersed over the globe. To the unpolluted current of their Caucasian structure, and to the segregating genius of their great Lawgiver, Sidonia ascribed the fact that they had not been long ago absorbed among those mixed races, who presume to persecute them, but who periodically wear away and disappear, while their victims still flourish in all the primeval vigour of the pure Asian breed."

We can remember the wit and humour with which this theory of the "Asian mystery" was received. Yet the laugh has not been exactly on our side. The apostle has proved the truth of his own teaching in his own person by a success which has never before fallen to the lot of a statesman in this country, whilst his theory is on all sides being most fully exemplified. Everywhere the Jew faces his fellow man, and he not only works his way to the front, but often stands a full head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd. Admitted, as it were, but yesterday to the bar, he is in the first rank as counsel: second to none in eloquence, in the lore of jurisprudence, and in the skill of the consummate advocate. The realms of

finance have always been his especial dominion; but never has he occupied so powerful a position as at the present day. He holds empires in pawn, and, by a wish to realize his possessions, could reduce half a continent to bankruptcy. His civil disabilities removed, he becomes a legislator distinguished by his ready gift of debate, or a magistrate conspicuous for his tact and common sense. Music and song and the drama have been so eminently the monopoly of the Hebrew race, that no one is surprised at a great composer or a great actress or a *prima donna* of European celebrity being of Jewish descent. In art, in science, in literature, the despised Hebrew is again among the most gifted in his profession. Whatever department is open to him, his success in it is so remarkable as to make him one of the conspicuous. When the field of his intellect was limited to medicine and finance, he rose till he could rise no higher; and now that the world closes none of its avenues at his approach, the talents which made him attain distinction, when under persecution, render the career he selects in this age of his toleration seldom a failure.

Nor is the Hebrew race deficient in other qualities which are prominently brought out in the career of the late Earl of Beaconsfield. From the earliest times the diplomacy of statesmanship has been the favourite exercise of the cultivated Jew. Facts fully support this assertion. The counsellor to the Saracen king of Granada was Samuel Levi, a Jewish rabbi. The prime minister of Alphonso VIII. was one named Joseph, a Jew. The ambassador from Charlemagne to Haroun Alraschid was Isaac, a Jew. The chief minister of Louis le Débonnaire was Zedekiah, a Jew. Don Isaac Abarbanel and Manasseh Ben Israel, world-wide politicians in their day, were also Jews. Again, glancing at the statesmen of modern times—at Mendizabel and Castelar in Spain; at Cremieux, Simon, Fould, and Gambetta in France; at Assur in Holland; at Daniel Manin and Artom in Italy; at Jacoby and others in Germany—we find them all men

of Hebrew lineage. It is not, therefore, surprising that, with these examples confronting him, the study of politics should have exercised a powerful fascination over the mind of Benjamin Disraeli. He had all the gifts—many of them in a marked degree, the characteristic of the Hebrew mind—calculated to lead a man on to success in parliamentary life. He was original, and stamped his originality upon all that he did, and in the end his views, no matter the opposition they had at first encountered, were generally accepted. When he entered parliament, he attached himself to neither party; he never had any sympathy with Whiggism; he did not represent Tory traditions as they were then understood; he was never a Radical nor a Peelite. He was throughout his career essentially himself; he made his own party, he made his own position, and he restored and reanimated an extinct creed. He saw instinctively the course the Tory party should adopt if it ever wished to regain its old ascendancy in the country; and he watched and waited; then taught and brought into unity a scattered following, until the end he set before him had been attained, and the doctrines he advanced had been fully received. Like his favourite hero, Bolingbroke, he settled the confused and discordant materials of English faction, and reduced them into a clear and systematic order.

"There are few positions less inspiring than that of the leader of a discomfited party," writes Mr. Disraeli, after praising the dignified conduct of Lord John Russell at a time when the Whigs were in a forlorn minority. "The labours and anxieties of a minister or of his rival on the contested threshold of office may be alleviated by the exercise or sustained by the anticipation of power; both are surrounded by eager, anxious, excited, perhaps enthusiastic adherents. There is sympathy, appreciation, prompt counsel, profuse assistance. But he who in the parliamentary field watches over the fortunes of routed troops, must be prepared to sit often alone. Few care to

share the labour which is doomed to be fruitless, and none are eager to diminish the responsibility of him whose course, however adroit, must necessarily be ineffectual. Nor can a man of sensibility in such a post easily obviate these discouragements. It is ungracious to appeal to the grey-headed to toil for a harvest which they may probably never reap, and scarcely less painful to call upon glittering youth to sacrifice its rosy hours for a result as remote as the experience in which it does not believe. Adversity is necessarily not a sanguine season, and in this respect a political party is no exception to all other human combinations. In doors and out of doors a disheartened opposition will be querulous and captious. A discouraged multitude have no future; too depressed to indulge in a large and often hopeful horizon of contemplation, they busy themselves in peevish detail, and by a natural train of sentiment associate their own conviction of ill-luck, incapacity, and failure, with the most responsible member of their confederation: while all this time inexorable duty demands, or rather that honour which is the soul of public life, that he should be as vigilant, as laborious, should exercise as complete a control over his intelligence and temper, should be as prompt to represent their principles in debate, and as patient and as easy of access in private conference, should be as active and as thoughtful, as if he were sustained by all that encourages exertion—the approbation of the good and the applause of the wise."

When the writer penned these lines, can we doubt but that he was drawing upon his own reminiscences when he was himself the head of a discomfited and disorganized party, and essaying all his arts to cheer it on to union and to victory? And throughout that terrible uphill struggle, how Hebraic were his tenacity of perseverance, his singleness of purpose, his apparent insensibility to the most malignant opposition, his splendid patience, his Heine-like wit which seldom shot its barbed arrows with-

out effect, his discipline, his dexterity, his strategy, and the power which dominates over all prejudices, and not only makes itself felt but makes itself indispensable! Against the apparently insurmountable obstacles which Mr. Disraeli during the earlier years of his parliamentary career had to encounter, the English genius—cold yet impatient, brave yet sensitive, fearing ridicule, with no eye for the unravelling of complications, lacking the instincts of generalship, easily wounded, easily depressed—would have retired a hundred times in despair, and have abandoned the conflict. It wanted the man full of self-reliance, blunted to external reproaches by the consciousness of intellectual superiority, accustomed to difficulties and opposition as the scion of a persecuted house, with the hereditary tact and disciplined self-control born of oppression long patiently endured; it wanted the diplomatic instincts, the clear, hard judgment never intoxicated by victory, never confused by defeat; it wanted, in fine, the man of infinite resources, and these were found in ample measure in Benjamin Disraeli, the Hebrew. It is but a poor set off against these brilliant Oriental gifts, to twit their possessor for those little weaknesses which were as much the consequence of his Jewish descent as were the vitality of his intellect and the tenacity of his purpose—his avowed love for pomp and splendour, his thirsting after the marvellous, his Chatham-like taste for theatrical effect, his somewhat ignoble appreciation of the refinements of civilization, his “Houndsditch dreams” of lofty rank, costly finery, blazing jewels, and the gorgeous generally. Whatever were his faults, he stands out against the canvas of history as one of the most brilliant individualities that has ever impassioned political warfare, and led and controlled the government of a country.

Of the earlier years of Benjamin Disraeli little is known, and since even the slight information we possess does not bear upon his political conduct, we shall content ourselves with but briefly alluding to the events

that occurred during the interval between his birth and his first appearance in the House of Commons. It may gratify the malevolence of the divine disappointed in not obtaining the preferment he expected, of the suppliant gentleman of the press whose “claims on the party” have been ignored, of the mercenaries of the “vagabond population” of the Lower House *et hoc genus omne*, to vent their spite upon the eminent statesman who has lately passed from us, by distorting facts and manipulating statements so as to render the object of their hate—a hate the keener since it failed to wound—ridiculous and contemptible; but good taste, if no warmer feeling, bids us remember the kindly remark of Archbishop Tillotson, “If we can say no good of a man let us be silent, unless it becomes absolutely necessary for us to speak the evil.” In dealing with the political conduct of a public man we have no concern here with private matters. We know that Mr. Disraeli was not sent to a public school, and that he was not entered at either of our universities; he is, however, not the only English statesman who has been bereft of these early advantages. In the hot days of youth he no doubt led the ordinary life of the gallant, whose passions are stronger than his principles; let malice make the most of it; also let him who is without sin cast the first stone. He contracted a few debts, and the fact has been diligently raked up, and spitefully commented upon. Is he the only youthful politician who has been dunned? Were Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Mirabeau, always solvent?

Still, about this early period of his history much exaggeration has been indulged in. When Lord Eldon, who was the son of a coal agent, was first promoted to the serene heights of the woolsack, his enemies loved to allude to him as the offspring of a coal heaver; he being no more the son of a coal heaver than is the son of a brewer the son of a publican. In the same malignant fashion the enemies of Benjamin Disraeli have loved to draw

attention to the various disadvantages under which he, at the commencement of his political career, is alleged to have so painfully laboured. As a plain matter of fact he was far from having been severely handicapped in an ordinary race for honour and promotion. He was not the first man of Jewish origin who had obtained a seat in the House of Commons, and therefore the fact of his being of alien birth, and of having once been attached to an alien creed, was not in itself an obstacle that others before him had not surmounted. Had he not, to his honour be it said, brought his birth so prominently forward on every occasion; had he attached himself to the Radical party; had he prided himself upon being sprung from the people; had he become the chief even of a Radical cabinet—if he had done these things, it is probable that his Hebrew descent would scarcely have drawn forth a sneer, though his career, eminently distinguished of course as it would have been, would yet have been deprived of those features which rendered it so unique and so brilliant. Thiers the son of the locksmith, Gambetta the son of the clothier, Abraham Lincoln the labouring man, have all sprung from a lower social level than Mr. Disraeli, yet malice has been fairly silent as to their humble origin; for it is a graceful compliment to the order of things that under a republican form of government a son of the people should aspire after, and should attain to, its highest post. It is not a matter for supreme surprise that Mr. Disraeli should have become a prominent member of parliament, or should have developed into a prime minister; but it is a marvellous tribute to his genius that he, of foreign blood and once an acreless man, should have been the accepted and the absolute leader of the English gentry and the English aristocracy. The Napoleons, charmed they never so wisely, were powerless to gain over the Faubourg St. Germain.

Much, too, has been said by the enemies of Mr. Disraeli of the social slights and

pecuniary distresses which were his lot at the outset of his career. Here, again, malice has usurped the place of truth. Mr. Isaac Disraeli was a well-known man of letters, in the enjoyment of excellent private means, moving in the best society, and acquainted with most of the celebrities of his day. His son, at a time when many young men were busy working for their degrees at the universities, was one of the most conspicuous dandies of the day, and the pet of several dames of the highest fashion. His name was constantly to be met with in the assemblies of the great; and the "intelligent foreigner" who visited our shores regarded him as so much of a personage as to describe with no little elaboration both his appearance and conversation. Had Mr. Disraeli come upon the London world some thirty years before he did, he was just the man for the second Pitt to have taken by the hand and to have ushered him, through the convenient system of a nomination borough, into the House of Commons. So much for his having been a "pariah," a "pauper," a "needy adventurer," a miserable snob, who "drew pictures, from his imagination and not from his experience," of a society into which he had never entered! Nor was he ever "a copying clerk" in a lawyer's office. At an early age he had been articled—as many a young man of good birth is at the present day articled—to a respectable firm of solicitors; but finding the law not to his taste, he soon quitted legal practices for the calling for which he felt himself more especially suited.*

We are told that men in whom the

* A correspondent writes to the *Times*, April 29, 1881:—"I have just ferreted out the only official record of the entry of Mr. Disraeli into public life, and it may be a fitting pendant to the account of his quitting it. It is his 'apprenticeship indenture' (recorded No. 2,953 of the old King's Bench of 1821) in the usual manner, with an affidavit of the execution. The date is the 10th of November, 1821, between Isaac D'Israeli, Esquire, of Bloomsbury Square, Benjamin D'Israeli, his son, and William Stevens, solicitor, of Frederick Place (Swain, Stevens, & Co.) whereby the son was placed for five years as clerk to learn, &c., in the usual form, to become an attorney of the Court of King's Bench and a solicitor of the Court of Chancery.' The deed was executed by all three parties, verified by the usual affidavit, filed on the 13th of November, and enrolled."

workings of genius are strong, predict the future they are one day to command. The child we know is father of the man, and the subjects which gravely interest his youth often compel him on to that afterstudy which secures fame for his ripening years. It is said that Petrarch, when a boy, was ever beating a retreat to silent haunts in order to scribble sonnets to certain of his gentler playmates. The early days of Sir Joshua Reynolds were spent, much to his father's disapproval, in sketching the faces of the different visitors who called at the house. Bacon, when scarcely out of the nursery, was so noted for thoughtful observation, that Queen Elizabeth nicknamed him "the young Lord Keeper." Some of the finest passages of Racine were composed when the future poet was but a pupil at Port Royal. Milton has sung to us in memorable verse what were his aspirations as a lad:—

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing: all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things.

Similar indications of decided predilection young Disraeli was now to exhibit. Literature, especially the literature which dealt with political combinations and party intrigues, was his favourite study. "Trained from early childhood by learned men, who did not share the passions and prejudices of our political and social life," he writes, "I imbibed on some subjects conclusions different from those which generally prevail, and especially with reference to our own country. How an oligarchy had been substituted for a kingdom, and a narrow-minded and bigoted fanaticism flourished in the name of religious liberty, were problems long to me insoluble, but which early interested me. But what most attracted my musing, even as a boy, were the elements of our political parties, and the strange mystification by which that which was national in its constitution had become

odious, and that which was exclusive was presented as popular." With brilliant wit, but with the flippancy of audacious youth, he embodied certain of these views in his well-known novel, "Vivian Grey," which appeared in 1826, and which took the literary, political, and fashionable world by storm. Its humorous gallery of portraits of famous contemporaries, sketched with all the epigram of Parisian wit, its daring individuality, its cynical sentiments, its thinly-veiled details of a scandal-loving age, made it not only the rage of the season, but of several seasons. It ran through numerous editions, and is even now, though its pages refer to a forgotten past, one of the best read of the author's productions. "Vivian Grey," wrote Mr. Disraeli in 1870, "is essentially a puerile work, but it has baffled even the efforts of its creator to suppress it. Its fate has been strange, and not the least remarkable thing is, that forty-four years after its first publication, I must ask the indulgence of the reader for its continued and inevitable re-appearance." It has amused the peculiar malice of Mr. Disraeli's enemies to carefully collate the most cynical and audacious passages in "Vivian Grey" with certain passages in the author's private and political life, and to prove that the witty, flippant romance is not so much a novel as an autobiography. Those who like to manufacture their premises, and then to jump to their conclusions, may perhaps consider such warped and strained comparisons a profitable study; to us they only appear as another instance of the hatred, malice, and all-uncharitableness which the career of Mr. Disraeli seems to have excited in certain splenetic and disappointed minds. One quotation we take from the book, which may perhaps illustrate the ambition and promptings of its author; at all events, if it has no bearing upon his future career, the illustration is not impertinent. "It was one of the first principles of Mr. Vivian Grey," we read, "that everything was possible. Men did fail in life, to be sure, and, after all,

very little was done by the generality; but still all these failures, and all this inefficiency, might be traced to a want of physical and mental courage. Now Vivian Grey was conscious that there was at least one person in the world who was no craven either in body or mind, and so had long come to the comfortable conclusion that it was impossible that his career could be anything but the most brilliant."

The popularity of the novel naturally led its author to other literary enterprises. In quick succession there proceeded from his pen "*The Voyage of Captain Popanilla*," a satire on society and politics, written in imitation of Swift, and full of humour and biting sarcasm; "*The Young Duke*," the feeblest of his romances, and which provoked his father to cry out when told of the book, "Dukes, sir! what does my son know about dukes? he never saw one in his life!" "*Alroy*," a tale of the twelfth century; and "*Contarini Fleming*," a physiological romance purporting to be a study of the development and formation of the poetic character. Benjamin Disraeli was now, though six-and-twenty, a well known man of letters, and one of the "curled darlings" in the circles presided over by Lady Blessington and the handsome dandy, Count D'Orsay. An American traveller, who ill repaid the hospitalities he received, by his offensive comments upon English society, thus describes the young fashionable author:—"Disraeli," he writes, "has one of the most remarkable faces I ever saw. His eye is black as Erebus, and has the most mocking, lying-in-wait sort of expression conceivable. His mouth is alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness, and when he has burst forth, as he does constantly, with a perfectly successful cataract of expression, it assumes a curl of triumphant scorn that would be worthy a Mephistopheles. A thick mass of jet-black ringlets falls over his left cheek almost to the collarless stock, while on the right temple it is parted and put away with the

smooth carefulness of a girl's. Patent leather pumps, a white stick with black cord and tassel, and a quantity of chains about his neck and pockets, served to make him a conspicuous object." The biographer of Lady Blessington writes of him in a more complimentary strain. "Many years ago, upwards of twenty," he says, "I frequently met Mr. Disraeli in Seamore Place. It needed no ghost from the grave to predicate even then his success in public life. Though in general society he was usually silent and reserved, he was closely observant. It required generally a subject of more than common interest to produce the fitting degree of enthusiasm to stimulate him into the exercise of his marvellous powers of conversation. When duly excited, however, his command of language was truly wonderful, his power of sarcasm unsurpassed; the readiness of his wit, the quickness of his perception, the grasp of his mind, that enabled him to seize all the points of any subject under discussion, persons would only call in question who had never been in his company at the period I refer to." Indeed all who crossed his path at this time predicted for "D'Israeli the younger," as he preferred to call himself and to spell his name, a brilliant future.

In the earlier part of the year 1829, Benjamin Disraeli started on an extensive tour of eastern travel, halting for some time in Constantinople, then wandering through Egypt and Syria, and finally making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The reminiscences of this tour are visible, as all readers of his romances are aware, in his tale of "*Alroy*," which he published shortly after his return home, and in his later and far more finished novel, "*Tancred*." In common with most authors, Mr. Disraeli broke out at one time of his life into verse, and like most authors whose poetry has failed to be appreciated, he considered his poetical effusions as among his highest literary efforts. The first portion of the much-derided "*Revolutionary Epic*" was given to



BENJAMIN DISRAELI

FACSIMILE OF THE SKETCH BY DANIEL MADLISE, R.A. IN THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

the world in 1834; though the sequel was not published till 1864, it was, however, begun in 1830. "It was on the plains of Troy," writes Mr. Disraeli in his preface to his epic, which was henceforth, in his own estimation, to take rank with the "Iliad," the "Æneid," the "Divine Comedy," and "Paradise Lost"—"It was on the plains of Troy that I first conceived the idea of the work. Wandering over that illustrious scene, surrounded by the tombs of heroes and by the confluence of poetic streams, my musing thoughts clustered round the memory of that immortal song to which all creeds and countries alike respond, which has vanquished chance and defied time. Deeming myself, perhaps too rashly in that excited hour, a poet, I cursed the destiny that had placed me in an age that boasted of being anti-poetical. And while my fancy thus struggled with my reason, it flashed across my mind, like the lightning that was then playing over Ida, that in those great poems which rise, the pyramids of poetic art, amid the falling and fading splendour of less creations, the poet hath ever embodied the spirit of his time. Thus, the most heroic incident of an heroic age produced in the 'Iliad' an heroic epic; thus, the consolidation of the most superb of empires produced in the 'Æneid' a poetical epic; the revival of learning and the birth of vernacular genius presented us in the 'Divine Comedy' with a national epic; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a religious epic. And the spirit of my time, shall it be uncelebrated? Standing upon Asia and gazing upon Europe, with the broad Hellespont between us, and the shadow of night descending on the mountains, these mighty continents appeared to me, as it were, the rival principles of government that at present contested for the mastery of the world. 'What!' I exclaimed, 'is the revolution of France a less important event than the siege of Troy? Is Napoleon a less interesting character than Achilles? For me remains the Revolutionary Epic.'"

Our admiration of Mr. Disraeli's literary

merits need not necessarily cloud our judgment, or render us blind to common sense. It must, therefore, candidly be admitted that the "Revolutionary Epic" is a complete failure: it is turgid, bombastic, and has scarcely a line or thought deserving of the name of poetry.

A grievous disappointment was now to turn Benjamin Disraeli's thoughts towards the arena in which he was for nearly half a century to exercise an influence which will not cease with his death. He had published "Contarini Fleming" anonymously, in order to test the appreciative faculty of the public, and it had fallen comparatively dead from the press. "Having written it with deep thought and feeling," he said, "I was naturally discouraged from further effort." Soured, and in something like a pet, he resolved to abandon literature and betake himself to the profession of politics. How accidental are often the circumstances which decide the whole future of a life, and lead men on to a greatness they might not otherwise have achieved! Had Handel followed the study of civil law, as had been his first intention, would music ever have possessed his wondrous oratorios? Had Smeaton agreed to be articulated to an attorney, would he have been handed down to posterity as one of the greatest of engineers? Had the mill, in which Rembrandt was reared, been lighted from the side instead of from the top, would he have become known as the master of that peculiar light and shade which has made his name immortal? Had Rousseau ever taken his seat at his father's cobbler's stall, would literature have been enriched by the "Confessions" and "Emile?" Had Hume been engaged in commerce, as his father desired, would he have become famous as a historian? Had Turner accepted the terms of a barber's apprentice, would critics now worship him as the Shakspeare of English landscape painters? And had Benjamin Disraeli not been disappointed by the temporary failure of his physiological romance, who knows whether he might not have sworn absolute fealty to

literature, instead of dividing his homage, and thus have passed to his rest unknown to political fame?

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

The hour he had chosen to carry out his new resolve was a momentous one in the fortunes of English politics. The administration of the Duke of Wellington had proved itself incapable of rightly interpreting the feeling of the country. At its head was the most splendid general of his day, yet who in his civil capacity was singularly short-sighted and opinionative. The Duke of Wellington was not a statesman. The very qualities which had made him a brilliant soldier, the rapidity with which he arrived at his conclusions, the abject obedience he had been in the habit of enforcing, his belief alone in the aristocratic influence—all interfered with the principles of true statecraft, and caused him to maintain views which were almost always adverse to the spirit of progress. Then when pressure was put upon him, he became "open to conviction," wished "the thing to be settled one way or another," and ended by discovering it to be his duty to abandon what he had upheld, or to pass what he had denounced. "The Duke of Wellington," writes the author of "Coningsby" in one of his frequent acute political reflections scattered throughout the pages of the novel, "has ever been the votary of circumstances. He cares little for causes. He watches events rather than seeks to produce them. It is a characteristic of the military mind. Rapid combinations, the result of a quick, vigilant, and comprehensive glance, are generally triumphant in the field: but in civil affairs, where results are not immediate; in diplomacy and in the management of deliberative assemblies, where there is much intervening time and many counteracting causes, this velocity of decision, this fitful and precipitate action, are often productive of considerable embarrassment, and sometimes of terrible discomfiture.

It is remarkable that men celebrated for military prudence are often found to be headstrong statesmen. In civil life a great general is frequently and strangely the creature of impulse; influenced in his political movements by the last snatch of information, and often the creature of the last aide-de-camp who has his ear."

The emancipation of the Catholics had not tended, as his Grace had imagined, to strengthen the position of his government. The Papists had been relieved from their disabilities by the cordial co-operation of the Whigs with the duke; but as soon as the measure which had instituted the union passed into law, the alliance between the two parties gradually dissevered itself. The Wellington Cabinet thus stood alone. The emancipation of the Catholics had alienated the Tories; the quarrel between the duke and Mr. Huskisson had alienated the Canningites; whilst the policy of the government, in opposing itself to such measures as would lead to the mitigation of the commercial and agricultural distress then prevalent, rendered it unpopular with the middle classes. In short, the conduct of the ministry met the usual fate of inconsistency. "It is a Tory government with a Whig policy," said the clergy and gentry, mindful of the Emancipation Act, "and no dependence can be placed on it." "In spite of its one liberal measure, it is still a high Tory administration," said the Whig and the manufacturing interest, anxious about parliamentary reform, the repeal of the corn laws, and the extension of the currency, "and it is idle to expect its assistance in our efforts." And now, whilst affairs were in this condition—the Cabinet weak, but obstinate; the people irritated, yet not aggressive—our fourth George died, and his brother, the sailor king, ascended the throne. As a matter of course, parliament was dissolved, and the Houses summoned to meet in the beginning of November.

The elections took place under the influence of an excitement hostile to

the Eldonite Toryism then in vogue. Across the channel, Frenchmen, wearied by the tyranny and incapacity of priestly Bourbonism, had dethroned their tenth Charles, and Louis Philippe reigned in his stead. The sympathy of insurrection spread to other lands. Belgium rose up against the authority of Holland, and created herself into an independent kingdom. In Warsaw the Poles had broken out into open revolt against the government of the Grand Duke Constantine, and were fighting, with all the patriotism of their race, for freedom from Tartar rule. Brunswick had expelled her duke, and Saxony was agitating for a new constitution. The independence of Greece had been acknowledged by Turkey. Nothing is more infectious than a revolt against despotism, and the efforts of Europe to free herself from the fetters of arbitrary government soon found a ready response in the hearts of the English people. Parliamentary reform was the cry throughout the country, and its advocates discovered themselves almost everywhere at the head of the poll. To such reform the duke was obstinately opposed. He had publicly declared that he was "not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of this nature, but that he would at once assert that so far as he was concerned, so long as he held any station in the government of the country, he should always feel it his duty to resist such measures when proposed by others." This statement sounded the knell of his overthrow. He, at one time the most popular man in England, was now the hated of the country, of the city, and of the press. He had to face an angry majority in parliament, and the result was easily foreseen. When the question of the Civil List for the new reign came before the House of Commons, it was moved that the subject be referred to a select committee. The motion was opposed by the government, but carried by a majority of twenty-nine. On the same day a proposition for parliamentary reform was to be brought to a division, and as the ministers expected a

defeat, they at once resigned, and Earl Grey, a Whig peer of powerful connections, and who had long been interested in the amendment of our representative system, was authorized to form a new administration. We know what followed. A reform bill was introduced, which passed the Commons, but which was rejected by the Lords. Earl Grey went to the palace, and placed two alternatives before the king—the resignation of the cabinet, or the creation of peers sufficient to form a majority in the upper house. His majesty preferred the resignation of the ministers. The Duke of Wellington was summoned to form a cabinet, and to propose a new reform bill. The country, however, declined to place any confidence in the duke; she was in one of her most feminine moods: she not only wanted her own will, but she would not rest content until she had her own will in her own way. With no uncertain voice she declared that Earl Grey should be restored to power, and that no reform bill which was not the measure of his cabinet should meet with her approval. The Duke of Wellington, who had failed to obtain the assistance of Sir Robert Peel, retired. Earl Grey again succeeded him; the opposition of the peers was conquered, and the reform bill became law by an immense majority, June 4, 1832.

A few weeks before the passing of this measure, Benjamin Disraeli made his first attempt to gain the suffrages of a constituency. A vacancy had occurred in the borough of High Wycombe, owing to the withdrawal of one of its Liberal members, Sir Thomas Baring, and the young author put himself forward to contest the seat. Maintaining the views, which he afterwards developed—that from the democratic character of the English constitution a political policy, based upon a union between the Tory party, such as it had been established by Wyndham and Bolingbroke, and not as it had degenerated into by the teaching of Eldon and Wellington, and the working classes, was the one most beneficial for the

interests of the country—he issued his address as an independent member. He was supported both by Tories and Reformers, though in the balance the favour of the former preponderated. His political creed on this occasion has been called unintelligible, yet it was both lucid and simple. He was strongly opposed to the Whigs, because he held that their object was to curtail the power of the crown, and extend the influence of the “governing families;” whilst their supporters, the middle classes, as he never ceased to assert, were both mischievous and incompetent whenever they attempted to direct matters of government.

“This is a middle-class movement,” said Mr. Disraeli in 1848, when opposing Mr. Hume’s motion to amend the national representation, on account of its tinkering with the constitution, in order to gratify the prejudices of a section of the country—“This is a middle-class movement: it is nothing more nor less than an attempt to aggrandize the power of that body of persons who have frankly told us that this is a middle-class government, and, therefore, that they will take care of their own interests and their own objects. The House will not forget what that class has done in its legislative enterprises. I do not use the term ‘middle-class’ with any disrespect; no one more than myself estimates what the urban population has done for the liberty and civilization of mankind; but I speak of the middle-class as of one which avowedly aims at predominance; and therefore it is expedient to ascertain how far the fact justifies a confidence in their political capacity. It was only at the end of the last century that the middle-class rose into any considerable influence, chiefly through Mr. Pitt—that minister whom they are always abusing. The first great movement in which they succeeded, showing their power over the people out of doors, independent of parliament, was the abolition of the slave trade—a noble and sublime act—but carried with an entire ignorance of the subject, as the event has proved. How far it has aggravated the

horrors of slavery, I stop not now to inquire. I make only one observation upon it with reference to the present subject of debate. The middle class emancipated the negroes; but they never proposed a Ten Hours Bill. So much for that move. The interests of the working classes of England were not much considered in that arrangement. Having tried their hand at colonial reform, by which, without diminishing the horrors of slavery, they succeeded in ruining our colonies—they next turned their hands to parliamentary reform, and carried the Reform Bill. But observe, in that operation, they destroyed, under the pretence of its corrupt exercise, the old industrial franchise, and they never constructed a new one. So much for the interests of the people in their second great legislative enterprise. So that, whether we look to their colonial reform or their parliamentary reform, they entirely neglected the industrial classes. Having failed in colonial as well as in parliamentary reform—and I need not show how completely they have failed in parliamentary reform, for the debate of this night is the perfect proof of that fact—they next tried commercial reform, and introduced free imports under the specious name of free trade. How were the interests of the working classes considered in this third movement? More than they were in their colonial or their parliamentary reform? On the contrary, while the interests of capital were unblushingly advocated, the displaced labour of the country was offered neither consolation nor compensation; but was told that it must submit to be absorbed in the mass. In their colonial, parliamentary, and commercial reforms, there is no evidence of any sympathy with the working classes; and every one of the measures so forced upon the country has, at the same time, proved disastrous. Their colonial reform ruined the colonies and increased slavery. Their parliamentary reform, according to their own account, was a delusion which has filled the people with disappointment and disgust. If their commercial reform have not proved

ruinous, then the picture that has been presented to us of the condition of England every day for the last four or five months must be a gross misrepresentation. In this state of affairs, as a remedy for half a century of failure, we are, under their auspices, to take refuge in financial reform, which I predict will prove their fourth failure, and one in which the interests of the working classes will be as little considered and accomplished."

Nor was Benjamin Disraeli, as it has been stated, when he addressed the constituency in front of the "Red Lion" hostel at High Wycombe, a reformer in the sense that Joseph Hume and Bulwer Lytton were reformers, though he frankly avowed that he was in favour not only of increasing the number of members of parliament, but also of increasing their privileges and enlarging their political capacity. "I am not one of those," he declares, in his "Vindication of the English Constitution," a treatise which was partly written at this time, though published at a later period, "who believe that the safety of the constitution is consulted by encouraging an exclusive principle in the formation of the constitution of our Third Estate. It is not the supposed democratic character which it has assumed under the new arrangement—I wish I could call it settlement—that fills me with any apprehensions. On the contrary, I wish it were even more Catholic, though certainly not more Papist." Nor was Benjamin Disraeli a Tory in the sense that Canning and Eldon and Wellington had caused the name to be understood. His Toryism was that of Sir William Wyndham, of Lord Bolingbroke, of the second Pitt—the Toryism that had banished placemen from the House of Commons, and had denounced Walpole, that had crushed the Papacy, opposed a standing army, cherished free elections, upheld short parliaments, and which, before the Brights and Cobdens had ever raised their voices, had applied philosophy to commerce and science to finance; it had nothing in common with

the Toryism then prevalent, which regarded every admission to the demands of progress as a sign that the "star of England's glory had set for ever," and that the future was to be the chaos of revolution. Yet the principles of the candidate for the suffrages of High Wycombe were imbued with the soundest Toryism. "This respect for precedent," he writes in his "Vindication," "this clinging to prescription, this reverence for antiquity, which are so often ridiculed by conceited and superficial minds, and move the especial contempt of the gentlemen who admire abstract principles, appear to me to have their origin in a profound knowledge of human nature and in a fine observation of public affairs, and satisfactorily to account for the permanent character of our liberties. Those great men who have periodically risen to guide the helm of our government in times of tumultuous and stormy exigency knew that a State is a complicated creation of refined art, and they handled it with all the delicacy a piece of exquisite machinery requires. They knew that, if once they admitted the abstract rights of subjects, they must inevitably advance to the abstract rights of men, and then that the very foundations of their civil polity would sink beneath them. . . . It is to this deference to what Lord Coke finely styles 'reverend antiquity' that I ascribe the duration of our commonwealth; and it is this spirit which has prevented even our revolutions from being destructive." But his affection for the past did not blind him to the evils that would arise if all its associations were maintained. Where it was necessary to advocate reform he ranked himself as a reformer, though his reforms were to be framed upon the old lines; the constitution was to be restored and renovated, not razed to the ground and then rebuilt. He was a Tory, because he had the reverence of the cultivated mind for antiquity; he was a Reformer, because he believed in the democratic influence. The union of Toryism with enlightened and restrained reform expressed, both in his

youth and in his old age, his political faith. "The Tory party in this country," he writes to Lord Lyndhurst, "is the national party; it is the really democratic party of England. It supports the institutions of the country, because they have been established for the common good, and because they secure the equality of civil rights, without which, whatever may be its name, no government can be free, and based upon which principle every government, however it may be styled, is in fact a democracy." On this occasion when he contested High Wycombe he was opposed by Colonel Grey, the third son of the prime minister, who headed the poll by a majority of eleven votes.

Benjamin Disraeli was soon called upon to make a second appeal to the electors of the borough. Parliament was dissolved August 16, 1832, and in the autumn a general election—the first under the new Reform Bill—ensued. The late candidate for High Wycombe, though he had been defeated, was not disheartened, and he lost no time in issuing his address. In its paragraphs he speaks with no uncertain voice: his opinions are clear and decided. In his advocacy of triennial parliaments, and in his attack upon places and pensions, we see him standing upon his favourite platform—the Toryism of Wyndham and Bolingbroke, and of the party which warred against the power and corruption of Walpole. The nomination system, which the Whigs were utilising in the most barefaced manner to push the fortunes of their friends and followers, also encountered the wrath of his indignation. Yet, as became a Tory adhering to the old principles of the creed, he was true to his teaching of the fusion of aristocracy with democracy, and his voice was raised in favour of such reforms in the condition of the people as he deemed necessary for their happiness and stability. As he candidly admitted in a speech at a public meeting held by his supporters, he was "a Conservative to preserve all that is good in our constitution, a Radical to remove all that is bad." The

address was issued October 1, 1832, and was dated from Bradenham House; it ran thus:—

"TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE
BOROUGH OF CHIPPING WYCOMBE.

"Friends and Neighbours,

"A Dissolution of Parliament, notwithstanding the machinations of those who have clogged the new charter of your rights which you have won with so much difficulty, with all the vexatious provisos of a fiscal enactment, being an event which cannot be much longer delayed, I think fit to announce my readiness to redeem the pledge which I made to you at the close of the late contest on the hustings of our borough, and to assure you of my resolution to go to the poll to make another, and, I doubt not, triumphant struggle for your independence.

"I warned our late masters of the dangerous precedent of electing a stranger merely because he was the relative of a minister; I foretold, as a consequence of their compliance, a system of nomination as fatal as those close corporations of which you are relieved. The event has justified my prediction. Wycombe has now the honour of being represented by the Private Secretary of the First Lord of the Treasury.*

"A few years back Aylesbury was threatened with the Private Secretary of the Lord Chancellor.† The men of Aylesbury rejected with loathing that which it appears suited the more docile digestion of the late electors of Wycombe. The Private Secretary of the Lord Chancellor was withdrawn, and in his place was substituted an unknown youth, whose only recommendation is, that he is the very young brother of a very inexperienced minister, and one who has obtained power merely by the renunciation of every pledge which procured him an entrance into public life.

"Gentlemen, I come forward to oppose this disgusting system of factious and intrusive nomination which, if successful, must be fatal to your local independence, and which, if extensively acted upon throughout the country, may even be destructive of your general liberties. I come forward wearing the badge of no party and the livery of no faction. I seek your suffrages as an independent neighbour, who, sympathizing with your wants and interests, will exercise his utmost influence in the great national council to relieve the one and support the other.

"But, while I am desirous of entering Parliament as an independent man, I have never availed myself of that much-abused epithet to escape an explicit avowal of my opinions. I am desirous of

* Col Grey, the son of Earl Grey.

† Mr. Le Marchant, the private secretary of Lord Brougham

assisting in the completion of the machinery of our new constitution, without which perfection I am doubtful whether it will work. I am prepared to support that ballot which will preserve us from that unprincipled system of terrorism with which it would seem we are threatened even in this town.

I am desirous of recurring to those old English and triennial Parliaments of which the Whigs originally deprived us, and, by repealing the taxes upon knowledge, I would throw the education of the people into the hands of the philosophic student, instead of the ignorant adventurer.

"While I shall feel it my duty to enforce on all opportunities the most rigid economy and the most severe retrenchment, to destroy every useless place and every undeserved pension, and to effect the greatest reduction of taxation, consistent with the maintenance of the public faith and the real efficiency of the Government, I shall withhold my support from every Ministry which will not originate some great measure to ameliorate the condition of the lower orders, to rouse the dormant energies of the country, to liberate our shackled industry, and re-animate our expiring credit.

"I have already expressed my willingness to assist in the modification of our criminal code. I have already explained how I think the abolition of slavery may be safely and speedily effected. With regard to the corn laws, I will support any change the basis of which is to relieve the consumer without injuring the farmer; and for the church, I am desirous of seeing effected some extensive commutation which, while it prevents tithe from acting as a tax upon industry and enterprise, will, I trust, again render the clergy what I am always desirous of seeing them, fairly remunerated, because they are valuable and efficient labourers, and influential because they are beloved.

"And now I call upon every man who values the independence of our borough, upon every man who desires the good government of this once great and happy country, upon every man who feels he has a better chance of being faithfully served by a member who is his neighbour, than by a remote representative who, like the idle wind no man regardeth, comes one day we know not whence, and goes the next we know not whither, to support me in this struggle against that rapacious, tyrannical, and incapable faction, who, having knavishly obtained power by false pretences, sillily suppose that they will be permitted to retain it by half measures, and who in the course of their brief but disastrous career have contrived to shake every great interest of the empire to its centre.

"Ireland in rebellion, the colonies in convulsion, our foreign relations in a state of such inextricable confusion, that we are told that war can alone sever the Gordian knot of complicated blunders; the farmer in doubt, the ship-owner in despair, our merchants without trade, and our manufacturers without markets, the revenue declining, and the army increased, the wealthy hoarding their useless capital, and pauperism prostrate in our once-contented cottages—Englishmen, behold the unparalleled empire, raised by the heroic energies of your fathers! Rouse yourselves in this hour of doubt and danger, rid yourselves of all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory—two names with one meaning, used only to delude you—and unite in forming a great national party which can alone save the country from impending destruction!

"I have the honour to remain,

"Your obliged and devoted servant,

"B. DISRAELI.

"Bradenham House, Oct., 1832."

High Wycombe sent two members to parliament, and three candidates had now entered themselves for the two seats. The return of Mr. Smith, afterwards the second Lord Carington, the lord of the manor, who had represented the borough for many years, was considered assured; hence the real struggle lay between Benjamin Disraeli and his former opponent, Colonel Grey. The nomination took place on the 10th of December, and the following figures showed the result of the poll—Mr. Smith, 179; Colonel Grey, 140; B. Disraeli, 119. For the second time the ambition of the young author had to encounter defeat.

It was only natural that a man—and especially a very confident and somewhat audacious young man—who sought to reduce the debased Toryism then accepted as the faith of the party to its first principles, should lay himself open to misrepresentation. The Whigs were unable to understand how a man could believe in the virtue and efficacy of an aristocracy, and yet attack an oligarchy. The Reformers could not understand how a man believed in the democratic principle, and yet had faith in Toryism. The Tories again, at least several of them, could not understand how a man,

who said he professed their tenets, yet put his trust in the power of the people. To Benjamin Disraeli this apparent confusion of ideas, and this alleged amalgamation of totally opposite forces, were but the logical deductions from premises which he declared could not be disputed. Since, as he clearly proved in his now forgotten pamphlet "What is He?" the Reform Act had destroyed the aristocratic principle in the country, it was necessary, unless the mischievous policy of the Whigs was to be supreme, for all who were anxious to obtain a strong government to advance the democratic principle. "A Tory and a Radical," he cries, "I can understand. A Whig—a democratic aristocrat—I cannot comprehend. If the Tories, indeed, despair of restoring the aristocratic principle, and are sincere in their avowal that the State cannot be governed with the present machinery, it is their duty to coalesce with the Radicals and permit both political nicknames to merge in the common, the intelligible, and the dignified title of a National Party." And what were the objects this national party should set before them? He answers the question some years later when the politician had developed into the practical statesman. This is the reply:—"To change back the oligarchy into a generous aristocracy round a real throne; to infuse life and vigour into the church, as the trainer of the nation, by the revival of convocation, then dumb, on a wide basis, and not as has been done in the shape of a priestly section; to establish a commercial code on the principles successfully negotiated by Lord Bolingbroke at Utrecht, and which, though baffled at the time by a Whig parliament, were subsequently and triumphantly vindicated by his political pupil and heir, Mr. Pitt; to govern Ireland according to the policy of Charles the First, and not of Oliver Cromwell; to emancipate the political constituency of 1832 from its sectarian bondage and contracted sympathies; to elevate the physical as well as the moral condition of the people, by

establishing that labour required regulation as much as property—and all this rather by the use of ancient forms and the restoration of the past, than by political revolutions founded on abstract ideas—appeared to be the course which the circumstances of this country required, and which, practically speaking, could only, with all their faults and backslidings, be undertaken and accomplished by a re-constructed Tory party."

It was a saying of the Duke of Wellington, who, certainly, in his career exemplified the truth of his remark, that "in politics it was impossible always to be consistent." Political history, it would be in vain to deny, exhibits, more than any other form of history, constant changes in the opinion of the individual. We see men ending the exact opposites of how they began; banning what they once blessed, and advocating what they once hotly thwarted: the Tory crossing over to the ranks of advanced Liberalism, the vehement Radical becoming a staunch supporter of all privileges; the advocate of protection contending for free trade; the denouncer of emancipation bringing in a bill for the relief of Catholic disabilities; the opponent of reform trimming his sails to catch the breeze of universal suffrage; the stout upholder of the union between Church and State, paving the way for disestablishment; and the like. We see men who once held opposite opinions, and whose political hate towards each other enlivened the dullness of many a debate, at last sitting on the Treasury bench, and taking sweet counsel together in the same cabinet. Strange coalitions, conversions, and friendships meet us at every turn, as we scan the records of political life, until, like the hero of Waterloo, we arrive at the conclusion that to expect consistency in political life is to look for the impossible.

The simple fact is that in the pursuit of politics consistency is not only an impossibility but an absurdity. If the spirit of the age were fixed, there is no reason why a man should not be as consistent in maintaining the opinions he holds in political

life as he is in private life. But in the study of politics—a subject ever developing with the progress of the nation in culture and civilization—to be consistent is only another word for either a culpable obstinacy or a culpable narrow-mindedness. For the man of to-day to pique himself upon professing the same opinions he entertained a generation since is simply to assert that, whilst the world is marching on, he prefers to stand still. All that we have a right to expect from our legislators is, that they will not express their views upon any grave question without having first devoted sound study to the subject, and that they will arrive at their conclusions only after weighty consideration. The vice of parliamentary life is not that men frequently change their opinions, but that they are in the habit of adopting them without previous thought or reflection; then, enlightened by subsequent study, they feel compelled—like another Fox, or Wellington, or Peel, or Palmerston—to abandon the teaching they once inculcated. We must bear this fact in mind when we have to deal with those occasions when Mr. Disraeli did not so much change his opinions as he felt bound to change his policy in order to be in that harmony with the spirit of the age, which the private individual can ignore, but the statesman must consult and respect. Yet few ministers throughout a long career have been so true to the political creed they professed as Lord Beaconsfield; he was true, not because he shut his eyes to advancement, but because he anticipated its strides, and only arrived at his conclusions after mature study and reflection. In his speeches and early pamphlets he foreshadowed the policy he adopted when he became minister of England. Throughout his life he was the steady and persistent foe of the Whigs. In his reform bill of 1867

he put into practice the tenets he promulgated on the hustings at High Wycombe, and advocated in his pamphlets, "What is He?" and the "Vindication of the English Constitution." The interest he took in the working classes, visible in the pages of his "Coningsby" and "Sybil," practically revealed itself when he possessed the power and opportunity of office. And his much-derided imperial policy, which raised his country to a position she had not occupied since the days of Palmerston, can be foretold from a perusal of his novel "Tancred," of his speeches during the Crimean war, and from every word that fell from his lips during a debate upon the foreign policy of England. Never have his enemies more stultified themselves, never have they laid themselves more easily open to a crushing refutation, never have they more clearly revealed the unscrupulous character of their hate, than when they made the charge against Benjamin Disraeli that his life was a tissue of inconsistencies. He was consistent, not because he was beneath the influence of the obstinacy and the prejudices of an Eldon, but because he was far-seeing, and had drawn up the articles of his political creed only after deep reading and reflection. The spiteful hacks on the press who had failed to write themselves into consular appointments, and the pamphleteering parsons who displayed the sweetness of the Christian character by rabid attacks which were always so irritatingly ignored, would have done wiser according to their miserable lights, instead of branding Lord Beaconsfield as "a political apostate," to have confined themselves to their favourite taunt, that "he had not a drop of English blood in his veins." The sneer essentially appealed to the audience they addressed, since it always impressed the vulgar and gratified the malevolent.

CHAPTER II.

"FORTI NIHIL DIFFICILE."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI was now for the third time to court political fortune at High Wycombe. Early in the December of 1834 he issued his address, and prepared to do battle against his old opponents. The turn of events was beginning to favour his ambition. The Grey ministry was not a happy family. When men of different political opinions agree to unite for the purpose of remedying abuses, there will always be those amongst the number who, on every occasion, advocate reform, as well as those who are nervously sensitive about meddling with established institutions, unless when absolutely compelled. There will be the men who wish to uproot the tree, the men who are content with lopping off a branch here and there and shoring up its trunk, and the men who fear to disturb vitality by any interference. These disintegrating elements soon appeared in the Grey cabinet. At first, animated by the impulse of a powerful majority, it entered upon a course of active legislation; it abolished slavery in the West Indies, it destroyed commercial monopoly in the East, it instituted reforms in the Irish Church Establishment it re-arranged our Poor Law system. Then divisions began to ensue; for some of his followers Earl Grey held opinions that were too advanced, for others he was too timid and retrogressive. Early in the March of 1833 the passionate and indiscreet Lord Durham, who was pledged to household suffrage and vote by ballot, resigned. The following year, on the disputed question of the reduction of the Irish Church Establishment, Mr. Stanley (afterwards Lord Derby), Sir James Graham, the Earl of Ripon, and the Duke of Richmond severed themselves from the ministry; they maintained that to appropriate the

revenues of the Irish Church to the purposes of the State was nothing less than sacrilegious confiscation. The renewal of the Coercion Act completed the dissolution of the original elements of the Reform cabinet. Ireland was in one of her customary fits of turbulence and sedition, and, under the influence of the treasonable oratory of Daniel O'Connell, was agitating for a repeal of the Union. Throughout the country murder and outrage were prevalent, and, unless the reign of law was to give way to a blind and vindictive anarchy, it was necessary to resort to extreme measures. Earl Grey proposed the renewal of the Coercion Act; his colleagues approved of the step, but wished to mitigate the severity of several of its clauses.

The dull, conscientious, fox-hunting Lord Althorp, whose influence in the House of Commons was enormous, desired that the clauses against public meetings should be dropped. The prime minister did not see his way to accept the amendment, and Lord Althorp resigned. In the face of the opposition of his quondam colleague, Earl Grey felt himself powerless to carry the Coercion Bill, and he also gave up the seals of office. Through the suggestions of Lord Brougham the Reform ministry was still kept in power; vacancies were filled up, and those who had not resigned were implored to retain their posts. It was the same house with new tenants. The "exhausted sensualist," Lord Melbourne, succeeded Earl Grey. Lord Althorp, who loved sport and hated office, was, after much persuasion, induced to accept the chancellorship of the exchequer and the lead of the House of Commons, on the condition that the Coercion Bill would be amended. Mr. Stanley was replaced at the Colonial Office by Mr. Spring Rice; the

Duke of Richmond at the Post Office by the Marquis of Conyngham; whilst Mr. Lyttleton succeeded Sir John Hobhouse as chief-secretary for Ireland. The other posts were filled up by their original occupants. Lord Brougham still held the Great Seal; Lord Palmerston was at the Foreign Office; Mr. Grant at the Indian Board; and Sir James Graham at the Admiralty.

For a few months the doctored-up ministry continued in power, busying itself with the Irish Coercion Bill, the Irish Tithe Bill, and offending many of its supporters by its subserviency to O'Connell. Then an accidental circumstance hastened its downfall. Lord Althorp, owing to the death of his father, was removed to the upper house, as Earl Spencer, and consequently had to resign the seals as chancellor of the exchequer. Lord Melbourne now proposed the vacant post to Lord John Russell; but to his surprise, and to the total dismay of his followers, the king, who hated Lord Brougham, and disapproved of the clauses of the Irish Church Bill, availed himself of this opportunity to dismiss the Melbourne cabinet, and to send for the Duke of Wellington. His grace, with his usual ready obedience to the commands of the sovereign, at once complied with the royal wishes, but recommended that the task of forming an administration should be intrusted to Sir Robert Peel, as, since the passing of the Reform Bill, the prime minister ought to belong to the lower house.* His Majesty assented. Sir Robert was then about to winter in Rome, but a messenger was despatched in hot haste to inform him of the change of events, and to request his instant

return. In the meantime the duke consented to act as first lord of the treasury and secretary of state.

Such was the position of affairs when Mr. Disraeli, for the third time, addressed the constituency of High Wycombe, and offered himself as one of their candidates. Disgusted with the shifting policy of the Grey-Melbourne cabinets, and the frequent alterations in its men and measures, he turned their whole administration into ridicule, and spoke warmly in support of Sir Robert Peel. The speech he delivered on this occasion—which he afterwards published as a pamphlet, entitled “The Crisis Examined”—is among his happiest specimens of oratory. It is replete with eloquence, and bristles throughout with those witty personalities and satirical illustrations which afterwards were among the most formidable weapons his opponents had to contend against. He was in favour of the repeal of the malt tax, he began, since it was an invidious exaction pressing heavily upon an already sufficiently burdened interest. He disapproved of the Irish tithes; “twelve months,” he said, “must not pass over without the very name of tithes in Ireland being abolished for ever; nor do I deem it less urgent that the Protestant establishment in that country should be at once proportioned to the population which it serves.” Still he supported the existence of the Irish Church, because experience had taught him that churches, when despoiled, only benefited the aristocracy. “I remember Woburn,” he laughed, “and I tremble.” He was no bigot, and he would grant the dissenters what they claimed in the matter of marriage and registration; also, he was no upholder of church rates. “As for the question of the church rate,” he said, “it is impossible that we can endure that, every time one is levied, a town should present the scene of a contested election. The rights of the establishment must be respected, but for the sake of the establishment itself, that flagrant scandal must be removed.” Further

* “So his grace declared after the Reform Bill was passed as its inevitable result, that henceforth the prime minister must be a member of the House of Commons; and this aphorism, cited as usual by the duke's parasites as demonstration of his supreme sagacity, was a graceful mode of resigning the pre-eminence which had been productive of such great party disasters. It is remarkable that the party who devised and passed the Reform Bill, and who, in consequence, governed the nation for ten years, never once had their prime minister in the House of Commons: but that does not signify; the duke's maxim is still quoted as an oracle almost equal in prescience to his famous query, ‘How is the king's government to be carried on?’”—*Coningsby*.

reformation he would not sanction; he was pledged to maintain the integrity of the church, and nothing would induce him to depart from his word. He would enter parliament if not as an adherent of Sir Robert Peel, who had displayed how worthy he was of the confidence of the country during the years he had led the Opposition, at least he would attach himself to no other statesman. It was true that the incoming prime minister might be called upon to pass measures that he had before deemed inexpedient, but he generously argued, holding the theory of the Duke of Wellington, that it was impossible always to be consistent with oneself in the profession of politics. "The truth is, gentlemen," he said, "a statesman is the creature of his age, the child of circumstance, the creation of his times. A statesman is essentially a practical character; and when he is called upon to take office, he is not to inquire what his opinions might or might not have been upon this or that subject—he is only to ascertain the needful and the beneficial, and the most feasible manner in which affairs are to be carried on. The fact is, the conduct and opinions of public men at different periods of their career must not be too curiously contrasted in a free and aspiring country. The people have their passions, and it is even the duty of public men occasionally to adopt sentiments with which they do not sympathize, because the people must have leaders. . . . I laugh, therefore, at the objections against a man that at a former period of his career he advocated a policy different to his present one: all I ask to ascertain is, whether his present policy be just, necessary, expedient; whether, at the present moment, he is prepared to serve the country according to its present necessities."

The chief feature of the address, however, was the speaker's humorous criticism of the proceedings of the Reform ministry, and of the manner in which it had been patched and re-patched until of its original materials scarcely anything was left. Save the

mordant philippics against Peel, it is the best piece of finished invective that Mr. Disraeli ever indulged in.

"The Reform ministry!" he cried. "Where is it? Let us calmly trace the history of this 'united cabinet.' Very soon after its formation, Lord Durham withdrew from the royal councils; the only man, it would appear, of any decision of character among its members. Still it was a most 'united' cabinet. Lord Durham only withdrew on account of his ill-health. The friends of this nobleman represent him as now ready to seize the helm of the state: a few months back, it would appear, his frame was too feeble to bear even the weight of the Privy Seal. Lord Durham retired on account of ill-health; he generously conceded this plea in charity to the colleagues he despised. Lord Durham quitted the 'united cabinet,' and very shortly afterwards its two most able members in the House of Commons, and two of their most influential colleagues in the House of Lords, suddenly seceded. What a rent! But then it was about a trifle. In all other respects the cabinet was most 'united.' Five leading members of the Reform ministry have departed; yet the venerable reputation of Lord Grey, and the fair fame of Lord Althorp, still keep them together, and still command the respect, if not the confidence, of the nation. But marvel of marvels! Lord Grey and Lord Althorp both retire in a morning, and in—disgust. Lord Grey is suddenly discovered to be behind his time, and his secession is even intimated to be a subject of national congratulation; Lord Althorp joins the crew again, and the cabinet is again 'united.' Delightful union! Then commenced a series of scenes unparalleled in the history of the administrations of any country; scenes which would have disgraced individuals in private life, and violated the decorum of domestic order. The lord chancellor dangling about the great seal in post-chaises, and vowing that he would write to the sovereign by the post; while cabinet ministers exchanged menac-

ing looks at public dinners, and querulously contradicted each other before the eyes of an admiring nation. Good God, gentlemen, could this go on? Why, even Mr. Ellice, the Right Hon. W. Ellice—who was so good as to send us down a member of parliament—he could no longer submit to nestle in this falling house, and he too quitted the ‘united’ cabinet because he had—what, for a ducat?—a sore throat! Why they ridicule themselves, and yet the tale is not all told. There is really too much humour in the entertainment. They make us laugh too much—the fun is overdone. It is like going to those minor theatres where we see Liston in four successive farces. Lord Melbourne, whose claim to being prime minister of England, according to the Whigs, is that he is a gentleman, Lord Melbourne flies to the king, and informs him that a plan of ‘church reform’ has been proposed in the ‘united cabinet,’ and that Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Spring Rice, the only remaining ministers in the slightest degree entitled, I will not say to the confidence, but to the consideration of the country, have, in consequence, menaced him with their resignations. I doubt not, gentlemen, that this plan of ‘church reform’ was only some violent measure to revive the agitation of the country and resuscitate the popularity of the Whigs, a measure which they never meant and never desired to pass. Perhaps feeling that it was all over with them, it was a wretched *ruse*, apparently, to go out upon a popular measure. However, Lord Melbourne, with as serious a face as he could command, informed His Majesty that the remains of the ‘united cabinet,’ Sir John Hobhouse and Lord John Russell, were still as united as ever, and he ended by proposing that the House of Commons should be led by his lordship, who, on the same principle that bad wine produces good vinegar, has somehow turned from a tenth-rate author into a first-rate politician. And then Lord Melbourne says that the king turned them out! Turned them out, gentlemen! why His Majesty

laughed them out! The truth is that this famous Reform ministry had degenerated into a grotesque and Hudibrastic faction, the very lees of ministerial existence, the offal of official life. They were a ragged regiment, compared with which Falstaff’s crew was a band of regulars. The king would not march through Coventry with them—that was flat. *The Reform ministry*, indeed! Why, scarcely an original member of that celebrated cabinet remained. You remember, gentlemen, the story of Sir John Cutler’s silk hose. Those famous stockings remind me of this famous ministry; for really, between Hobhouse darns and Ellice botching, I hardly can decide whether the hose are silk or worsted. *The Reform ministry!* I daresay now some of you have heard of Mr. Ducrow, that celebrated gentleman who rides upon six horses. What a prodigious achievement! It seems impossible, but you have confidence in Ducrow. You fly to witness it. Unfortunately, one of the horses is ill, and a donkey is substituted in his place. But Ducrow is still admirable; there he is bounding along in a spangled jacket and cork slippers. The whole town is mad to see Ducrow riding at the same time upon six horses; but now two more of the steeds are seized with the staggers, and lo! three jackasses in their stead. Still Ducrow persists and still announces to the public that he will ride round his circus every night on his six steeds. At last all the horses are knocked up, and now there are half a dozen donkeys. What a change! Behold the hero in the amphitheatre, the spangled jacket thrown on one side, the cork slippers on the other. Puffing, panting, and perspiring, he pokes one sullen brute, thwacks another, cuffs a third, and curses a fourth, while one brays to the audience, and another rolls in the sawdust. Behold the late prime minister and the Reform ministry! The spirited and snow-white steeds have gradually changed into an equal number of sullen and obstinate donkeys; while Mr. Merryman, who, like the lord chancellor (Brougham), was once

the very life of the ring, now lies his despairing length in the middle of the stage, with his jokes exhausted and his bottle empty."

In spite, however, of his wit and talk, it was not to be; High Wycombe declined to be won. The election took place, and Benjamin Disraeli for the third time saw himself at the bottom of the poll. The numbers were—Smith, 288; Grey, 147; Disraeli, 128. His irrepressible buoyancy, however, did not forsake him. "He was not at all disheartened," he said at a Conservative dinner held in his honour, "he did not feel in any way like a beaten man. Perhaps it was because he was used to it. He would say of himself, with the famous Italian general, who being asked in his old age why he was always victorious, replied that it was because he had always been beaten in youth."

For the first time in his political career Sir Robert Peel, on taking his seat as the chief of a cabinet, relied entirely upon himself, and cut the leading strings which had bound him to those on whom he depended. In his earlier years he had leant upon the counsels of Lord Eldon, and when he had emancipated himself from Eldon he fell under the magic wand of the hero of Waterloo. But during the period when he had led the opposition against the Reform ministry his character had developed itself. He was not only the chief of the Opposition, but he was the Opposition itself. His powers of debate, his business-like capacity for dealing with details, the confidence with which his character inspired his followers, his patience, the dexterity with which he seized upon the ideas of other people, passing them through the mill of his receptive intellect and turning them out as his own, his exquisite plausibility—all caused him to tower above those who surrounded him. What he advised, his followers carried out; his approval or disapproval gave the cue to those who sat behind him, and seldom had he occasion to complain of disobedience in the ranks. Upon being summoned to

succeed Lord Melbourne, the in-coming premier saw that the narrow and prejudiced Toryism of the Duke of Wellington was out of harmony with the spirit of the times, and he struck out a course for himself. Like all men lacking in originality and self-reliance, he instituted a policy of compromise. He took up a middle position between the short-sighted Toryism that had succeeded the policy of Pitt, and the advanced Radicalism then being taught by Joseph Hume and the reformers. He was not prepared to build up afresh or to lay before his party the designs of the architect; but he would add when necessary to the fabric, and restore where it was crumbling. If with loyalty to his sovereign, he could have avoided the task of forming an administration, he would no doubt have been glad of an excuse. He saw that, though the country was irritated with the Whigs, it was not yet ripe for Tory government. He knew that his power must depend upon the result of a general election, and that he would, almost inevitably, enter parliament with a minority. Had he been in England at the time of the dismissal of the Melbourne cabinet he would have advised delay; but he had now no choice except to act as desired by the duke. "I feel it my duty," he said in the House of Commons, "in spite of the prospects before me, to maintain the post which has been offered me, and to stand by the trust which I did not seek, but which I could not decline."

Meanwhile his return from Rome was anxiously expected, and created an excitement in the winter of 1834 seldom visible at that dull season of the year. The clubs were full, country-houses were deserted, men were indifferent to hunting and hurried up to town, whilst the Tadpoles and Tapers, and the other "twelve hundred a yearers," went nervously to and fro, wondering whether, under the new *régime*, their claims would be recognized, and they would again find themselves drawing salary from the treasury. But the great ques-

tion of the hour, about which bets were freely laid, and which excited replies of the most varied character, was who were to form the government, and what was the government to be? "Was it to be," wrote Mr. Disraeli in his clever political romance, "a Tory government or an enlightened-spirit-of-the-age liberal-moderate-reform government? was it to be a government of high philosophy or of low practice; of principle or of expediency; of great measures or of little men? A government of statesmen or of clerks? Of humbug or of humdrum? Great questions these, but unfortunately there was nobody to answer them. They tried the duke; but nothing could be pumped out of him. All that he knew, which he told in his curt, husky manner, was, that he had to carry on the king's government. As for his solitary colleague, he listened and smiled, and then in his musical voice asked them questions in return, which is the best possible mode of avoiding awkward inquiries. It was very unfair this; for no one knew what tone to take; whether they should go down to their public dinners and denounce the Reform Act or praise it; whether the church was to be re-modelled or only admonished; whether Ireland was to be conquered or conciliated."

All doubts were, however, soon set at rest by the arrival of Sir Robert Peel. At once he began to carry out his colourless creed of compromise. He invited two of the most prominent reformers, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Stanley and Sir James Graham, to enter his cabinet, an offer which, however, they declined. In his manifesto to the electors at Tamworth, he denied that he was an opponent of rational reform or a defender of abuses. He declared that he considered the Reform Bill "a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question—a settlement which no friend to the peace and welfare of the country would attempt to disturb, either by direct or insidious means." On taking his seat upon the treasury bench, he bade for support by

a hollow but plausible programme. He offered the prospect of continued peace—the restored confidence of powerful states who were willing to seize the opportunity of reducing great armies, and thus to diminish the chances of hostile collision. He offered reduced estimates, improvements in civil jurisprudence, reform of ecclesiastical law, the settlement of the Irish tithe question, the removal of any real abuse in the church, the redress of such grievances as the dissenters had just reasons to murmur against, with various other taking proposals to catch the public. Yet this programme, excellent on paper and in specious speeches, was found to mean nothing when brought under the fierce light of committees.

"The Tamworth manifesto of 1834," comments Mr. Disraeli, "was an attempt to construct a party without principles; its basis therefore was necessarily latitudinarianism, and its inevitable consequence has been political infidelity. At an epoch of political perplexity and social alarm, the confederation was convenient, and was calculated by aggregation to encourage the timid and confused. But when the perturbation was a little subsided, and men began to inquire why they were banded together, the difficulty of defining their purpose proved that the league, however respectable, was not a party. The leaders indeed might profit by their eminent position to obtain power for their individual gratification, but it was impossible to secure their followers that which, after all, must be the great recompense of a political party, the putting in practice of their opinions; for they had none. There was indeed a considerable shouting about what they called Conservative principles; but the awkward question naturally arose, what will you conserve? The prerogatives of the Crown, provided they are not exercised; the independence of the House of Lords, provided it is not asserted; the ecclesiastical estate, provided it is regulated by a commission of laymen. Everything, in short, that is

established, as long as it is a phrase and not a fact.”*

The history of this short-lived administration is well known. Aware that he was holding power in face of a majority, Sir Robert Peel exerted all the parliamentary wiles, in which he was so consummate a master, to avoid an open battle. The extreme Tories—looking upon the policy he now for the first time called *Conservatism*, as only Whiggery under a new name—had deserted him. Many of the milder Liberals, mindful of the Peel who had opposed the Reform Bill, doubted his sincerity, and stood aloof. The voice was that of Jacob, they said, but the hands were those of Esau. From February to April the prime minister succeeded in avoiding a pitched battle; then the Irish tithe question forced him to come out of cover. Lord John Russell had moved that the house resolve itself “into a committee of the whole house in order to consider the present state of the church establishment in Ireland, with the view of applying any surplus of the revenues not required for the spiritual care of its members, to the general education of all classes of the people without distinction of religious per-

suasion.” Sir Robert felt bound to oppose the motion. He denied the right of the legislature to alienate ecclesiastical property for secular purposes. He described the move of Lord John Russell as a proposal to affirm an abstract right to deal with an imaginary surplus at some indefinite period, which might never arrive. What was to be gained, he asked, by the affirmation of so vague a proposition? It might serve as another firebrand to kindle the inflammatory wars of Irish religious sentiment, but it could not lead to any practical good. The house, however, supported the motion of Lord John by a majority of thirty-three, and the prime minister, accepting his defeat, sent in his resignation.

“Twopolitical results,” writes Mr. Doubleday in his memoir of Sir Robert Peel, “unquestionably sprung out of this short and singular episode. One was that Sir Robert Peel, by the nerve and readiness which he displayed, added to his reputation as a first-rate debater and man of business. The second was the confidence in his future strength, which he now acquired from the contemplation of the altered position of his political rivals. This renewal of confidence was quite apparent in those addresses which his presence at certain civic festivals, got up probably for that purpose, enabled him to utter; and the emphatic advice of ‘Register! register! register!’* with which he greeted his friends on one of these occasions, demonstrated that he trusted to open for himself the avenue to future power, and distinctly foresaw a time when he should again hold in his hand the destinies of his country.” Mr. Disraeli indulges in similar reflections. “We believe we may venture to assume,” he writes, “that at no period during the movements of 1834-35 did Sir Robert Peel ever believe in the success of his administration. Its mere failure could occasion him little dissatisfaction; he was compen-

* We know how wittily the Conservative programme was summed up in “Coningsby”:—

“By Jove!” said the panting Buckhurst, throwing himself on the sofa, “it was well done; never was any thing better done. An immense triumph! The greatest triumph the Conservative Cause has had. And yet,” he added, laughing, “if any fellow were to ask me what the Conservative Cause is, I am sure I should not know what to say.”

“Why, it is the cause of our glorious institutions,” said Coningsby. “A Crown robbed of its prerogatives; a Church controlled by a commission; and an Aristocracy that does not lead.”

“Under whose genial influence the order of the Peasantry, ‘a country’s pride,’ has vanished from the face of the land,” said Henry Sydney, “and is succeeded by a race of serfs, who are called labourers, and who burn ricks.”

“Under which,” continued Coningsby, “the Crown has become a cipher; the Church a sect; the Nobility drones; and the People drudges.”

“It is the great constitutional cause,” said Lord Vere, “that refuses everything to opposition; yields everything to agitation; conservative in Parliament, destructive out-of-doors; that has no objection to any change provided only it be effected by unauthorized means.”

“The first public association of men,” said Coningsby, “who have worked for an avowed end without enunciating a single principle.”

“And who have established political infidelity throughout the land,” said Lord Henry.

“By Jove!” said Buckhurst. “what infernal fools we have made ourselves this last week!”

* “‘There is nothing like a good small majority,’ said Mr. Taper, ‘and a good registration.’

“‘Ay! register, register, register!’ said the duke. ‘Those were immortal words.’”—*Coningsby*.

sated for it by the noble opportunity afforded to him for the display of those great qualities, both moral and intellectual, which the swaddling-clothes of a routine prosperity had long repressed, but of which his opposition to the Reform Bill had given to the nation a significant intimation. The brief administration elevated him in public opinion, and even in the eye of Europe; and it is probable that a much longer term of power would not have contributed more to his fame."

On the resignation of the Peel cabinet the king had no alternative but to re-instate Lord Melbourne—"the minister, not of his wish, but of his necessity"—in power. This change of government brought again Benjamin Disraeli to the front. Mr. Henry Labouchere, the member for Taunton, had been appointed master of the mint and vice-president of the board of trade, and, as a natural consequence, vacated his seat. On appearing before his constituency for re-election, he found himself opposed by the thrice-rejected of High Wycombe. The contest was unequal, yet Mr. Disraeli had no reason to complain of his reception; the Tories gave him their support, and he found in the borough a good following to encourage him to proceed actively with his canvass. In his address and in his speeches, he frankly avowed the principles he professed. He had been accused, he said, of inconsistency, because, on the one hand, though a Tory, he appreciated the influence of the working classes, and, on the other, though he admitted the claims of a democracy, he supported an aristocracy; but, as a matter of fact, if there were one thing he piqued himself upon more than another, it was his consistency. He had always resisted, with his utmost energy, the party of which his opponent was a member, for he had never ceased to avow that the Whigs were an anti-national party, careful only to identify their own interests with those of the country. He had considered it his duty to thwart the Whigs, to insure their discomfiture, and, if possible, to effect their

destruction as a party. For these ends he had strenuously laboured; and since, on his entering political life, he had found the Tory party "a shattered, a feeble, a disheartened fragment, self-confessing its own inability to carry on the king's government, and announcing an impending revolution," he sought—openly sought—by new combinations to oppose the policy of the Whigs. But how was that policy to be opposed? Where were the elements of a party to keep the Whigs in check, and to bring back the old constitutional balance? "Gentlemen," he cried, addressing the Taunton electors, "I thought they existed in the liberal Tories and in those independent Reformers who had been returned to parliament independently of the Whigs. I laboured for their union, and I am proud of it. Gentlemen, remember the Whig policy! they had a packed parliament; they had altered the duration of parliaments once before; I wished to break their strength by frequent elections and frequent appeals to a misgoverned people, and, therefore, I advocated a recurrence to those triennial parliaments which it was once the proudest boast of the Tories to advocate. I wished to give the country, gentlemen, a chance of representing the neighbouring towns, where they are esteemed, instead of the nominees of a sectarian oligarchy. Therefore, I proposed the adoption of the ballot in the only constituencies willing to assume it. And now, where is my inconsistency?" The Whig party had fallen to pieces; the object for which he, Benjamin Disraeli, had laboured was attained; the balance of parties was restored; hence, measures which at one time it had been necessary for him to advocate, could now be abandoned. In other words, he acted upon the opinions he had advanced some months before at High Wycombe, when defending Sir Robert Peel for the course he might in the future pursue. What had been "just, necessary, and expedient" when the Tories were disheartened and disunited, and the Whigs powerful and unanimous, was now no

longer just, necessary, and expedient when the Whigs were divided and overthrown, and the Tories organized and sanguine.

In the course of the various speeches he delivered on that occasion, Benjamin Disraeli made frequent reference to the condition of Ireland, and his remarks led to a quarrel which malice will not willingly let die. As the witty nicknames attached by Lord Beaconsfield to the more conspicuous of his opponents will endure as long as our parliamentary debates continue to excite interest, so will the fierce verbal onslaught of Daniel O'Connell upon the then Mr. Disraeli continue to be raked up and remembered. Nor can it be said that in the contest, if the object of abuse be to sting and stick, the defeat was with the so-called Liberator. Ireland was at this time a thorn festering more sorely than usual in the political flesh of England. The evils under which she laboured had, beneath the selfish and mischievous policy of O'Connell, been the means of creating such mutinous discontent that nothing short of dismemberment of the empire would satisfy the rebels. It was neither absenteeism, nor Protestantism, nor landlordism, nor exclusion from the suffrage, that was now complained of: the one and only grievance was the existence of the English in Ireland. At first O'Connell had been just and moderate in his demands; but as his power increased, with it the nature of his requests developed. From Catholic emancipation he passed to reform, and when these had been granted he raised the cry of "Ireland for the Irish!" which, being interpreted, signified an Irish parliament with a Catholic majority, and repeal of the Union. He held the balance between parties at Westminster, and forced the Whigs to recognize the authority he swayed. If England is to govern Ireland she must rule her with the strong arm, which refuses to relax its firm hold until disaffection is stamped out. The arm of Lord Melbourne was not strong; he truckled

to O'Connell; and between the Whigs and the agitator a secret treaty had been entered into, by which O'Connell pledged himself to support the government in return for the aid of the ministry in pushing forward his own pet Irish schemes. These schemes had, however, for their object more the advancement of the agitator than the prosperity of Ireland. "The Catholic church," writes Mr. Froude, "owed much to O'Connell; the people less than nothing. No practical good thing, not even the smallest, ever came to the Irish peasant from his glorious liberator. Emancipation and agitation might make the fortunes of patriotic orators, and make the castle tremble before the Catholic archbishops; but they drained no bogs, filled no hungry stomachs, or patched the rags in which the squalid millions were shivering: and still as the potato multiplied, the people multiplied, and beggary multiplied along with them. O'Connell cared no more for the poor than the harshest of Protestant absentees. The more millions that he could claim as behind him, the mightier he seemed. His own estates at Derrynane and Cahirciveen were as naked, as neglected, as subdivided, as littered with ragged crowds depending on a single root for their subsistence, as any other in the county to which he belonged."

It had so happened that when Benjamin Disraeli was contesting Wycombe for the first time, his friend Lytton Bulwer had endeavoured to obtain a letter of recommendation to the constituency for him from O'Connell, who, though a representative reformer, was not then the violent, unscrupulous demagogue he afterwards so pitifully developed into. O'Connell had courteously replied that he regretted having no acquaintance at Wycombe to whom he could recommend Mr. Disraeli. "It grieves me, therefore," he wrote, "to be unable to serve him on his canvass. I am as convinced as you are of the great advantage the cause of genuine reform would obtain from his return. His readiness to carry the

Reform Bill into practical effect towards the production of cheap government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause. I should certainly express full reliance on his political and personal integrity, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to assist in any way in procuring his return, but that, as I have told you, I have no claim on Wycombe." These words were kind, encouraging, and in every way honourable to the writer; but the O'Connell of 1832 was a totally different man to the arrogant, vituperative bully of 1835. He had not yet been totally demoralized by the homage of the rabble, who insulted humanity by calling themselves men. When Benjamin Disraeli perceived the traitorous course the agitator, shortly after the Reform Bill, had entered upon, and that the O'Connell policy was hostile to the welfare of the country, he felt it incumbent upon himself, then expounding his views to a new constituency, to speak in no measured terms upon the subject. On the occasion, which has now become historical, he alluded to the strange alliance that had been effected between Lord Melbourne and the Irish tribune, and in the course of his remarks, said:—"I look upon the Whigs as a weak, but ambitious party, who can only obtain power by linking themselves with a traitor. I ought to apologise to the admirers of Mr. O'Connell, perhaps, for this hard language. I am myself his admirer, so far as his talents and abilities are concerned, but I maintain him to be a traitor."

When this speech was brought to the ears of the agitator, his anger was extreme. He was then at Dublin, carrying on his dirty business as a professional seditious-monger, and, happening at the time to address a trades' union meeting, he thus delivered himself of his wrath:—"Never," he exclaimed, "in the annals of political turpitude, was there anything deserving the name of blackguardism to equal the attack of Benjamin Disraeli upon me. What is

my acquaintance with this man?" he yelled. "Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the borough of Wycombe became vacant. I then knew him, but not personally—I knew him merely as the author of one or two novels. He got an introduction to me, and wrote me a letter stating that I was a Radical reformer, and as he was also a Radical, and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking who would be influenced by my opinion, he would feel obliged by receiving a letter from me, recommendatory of him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf. I am in the habit of letter-writing, and Mr. Disraeli thought this letter so valuable that he not only took the autograph, but had it printed and placarded. It was, in fact, the ground upon which he canvassed the borough. He was, however, defeated, but that was not my fault. I did not demand gratitude from him; but I think if he had any feeling of his own he would conceive I had done him a civility at least, if not a service, which ought not to be repaid by atrocity of the foulest description."

Oblivious of the fact, that whereas in 1831 he was the foe of the Whigs, and was now their ally—oblivious, also, of the culpable development of his views, that whereas in 1831 he preached moderate reform, he now advocated decided revolution—O'Connell proceeded in the following strain:—

"At Taunton this miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary! Why, I was a greater incendiary in 1831 than I am at present, if I ever were one; and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to this is—he is a liar. He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that

could tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I say again, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind; and England is degraded in tolerating or having upon the face of her society a miscreant of his abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. His name shows he is by descent a Jew. . . . I have the happiness of being acquainted with some Jewish families in London; and more accomplished ladies, or more humane, cordial, high-minded, or better-educated gentlemen, I have never met. It will not be supposed, therefore, that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants amongst them, however, also, and it must have certainly been from one of those that Disraeli descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross, whose name, I verily believe, must have been Disraeli. For aught I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the cross.”

This speech found its way into several newspapers, and was especially viciously approved of, and commented upon, by the *Globe*, then an organ attached to the interests of the Whig party.

It was in the days when a man, smarting under severe insult, appealed to his sword instead of to his solicitor, and Mr. Disraeli was not slow in sending a challenge to the Irish tribune. It had so happened that in a former duel O’Connell had the misfortune to kill his man, and, like the distinguished Frenchman, Emile de Girardin, who has lately passed from us, he registered a solemn vow that under no provocation would he ever accept another challenge to mortal combat. A high-minded man under

such conditions, and aware that he could not be called to account for his words, would have been more than usually careful and measured in his language when dealing with an opponent, or with matters that he strongly disapproved of; but O’Connell was, in his moral capacity, in no way superior to the usual run of his noisy, coarse, blustering class; in his political acts there was a good deal of the knave, and in his private acts there was something of the poltroon. He refused to go out with Mr. Disraeli. His son, who had once before fought for his father, and had fired before his time, was then challenged to “resume your vicarious duties of yielding satisfaction for the insult which your father has so long lavished with impunity upon his political opponents.” Morgan O’Connell, however, was no fire-eater, and in a somewhat craven letter he begged to be excused. Thus debarred from obtaining the satisfaction then customary in cases of this kind, Mr. Disraeli had recourse to his pen, a weapon which he no doubt wielded with greater dexterity than he would have the sword. He wrote to O’Connell, and sent a copy of the letter to the *Times*, a journal which at this time always inserted his correspondence. It is dated May 5, 1835, and thus it runs:—

“MR. O’CONNELL,

“Although you have placed yourself out of the pale of civilization, still I am one who will not be insulted, even by a Yahoo, without chastising it. When I read this morning in the same journals your virulent attack upon myself, and that your son was at the same moment paying the penalty of similar virulence to another individual on whom you had dropped your filth,* I thought that the consciousness that your opponents had at length discovered a source of satisfaction might have animated your insolence to unwonted energy, and I called upon your son to reassume his vicarious office of yielding satisfaction for his shrinking sire. But it seems that that gentleman declines the further exercise of the pleasing duty of enduring the consequences of your libertine

* Lord Alvanley, on being freely abused by O’Connell, called the agitator a “bloated buffoon.” Morgan O’Connell felt bound to defend his father, when the duel ensued in which the son fired too soon.

harangues. I have no other means, therefore, of noticing your effusion but this public mode. Listen then to me.

"If it had been possible for you to act like a gentleman, you would have hesitated before you made your foul and insolent comments upon a hasty and garbled report of a speech which scarcely contains a sentence or an expression as they emanated from my mouth; but the truth is, you were glad to seize the first opportunity of pouring forth your venom against a man whom it serves the interest of your party to represent as a political apostate."

After severely alluding to the apostacy of O'Connell in abusing the Whigs, and then cementing an alliance with the party he had so freely denounced, the letter thus concludes :—

"I admire your scurrilous allusion to my origin. It is quite clear that the 'hereditary bondsman' has already forgotten the clank of his fetters. I know the tactics of your church; it clamours for toleration, and it labours for supremacy. I see that you are quite prepared to persecute. With regard to your taunts as to my want of success in my election contests, permit me to remind you that I had nothing to appeal to but the good sense of the people. No threatening skeletons canvassed for me; a death's-head and cross-bones were not blazoned on my banners. My pecuniary resources, too, were limited; I am not one of those public beggars that we see swarming with their obtrusive boxes in the chapels of your creed, nor am I in possession of a princely revenue wrung from a starving race of fanatical slaves. Nevertheless, I have a deep conviction that the hour is at hand when I shall be more successful, and take my place in that proud assembly of which Mr. O'Connell avows his wish no longer to be a member. I expect to be a Representative of the people before the Repeal of the Union. We shall meet at Philippi; and rest assured that, confident in a cause, and in some energies which have been not altogether unproved, I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember and repent the insults that you have lavished upon

"BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI."

The next step of the writer was to contradict the mis-statements that had got abroad, and, notably, to refute the garbled and mischievous construction put upon the affair by the *Globe* newspaper. Again, he

took into his confidence the columns of the leading journal. It is necessary, he wrote, owing to the false reports that had been circulated, to enter into some detail with regard to the controversy between himself and Mr. O'Connell, and especially with regard to the misconstructions adopted by the *Globe*. He emphatically denied the truth of any of the statements made by the Irish tribune. He held the same political opinions now as he had advanced when first he contested High Wycombe. He did not require Mr. O'Connell's recommendation, or that of any one else for the borough, the suffrages of whose electors he had the honour to solicit. His family resided in the neighbourhood; he stood alike on local influence and distinctly avowed principles, and he opposed the son of the prime minister. He was absent from England during the discussion on the Reform Bill, and, on his return, the bill was virtually, though not formally, passed. "I found the nation," he writes, "in terror of a rampant democracy; I saw only an impending oligarchy. I found the House of Commons packed, and the independence of the House of Lords announced as terminated. I recognized a repetition of the same oligarchical *coups d'état* from which we had escaped by a miracle little more than a century before; therefore I determined, to the utmost of my power, to oppose the Whigs. Why, then, it may be asked, did I not join the Tories? Because I found the Tories in a state of ignorant stupefaction. The Whigs had assured them that they were annihilated, and they believed them. They had not a single definite or intelligible idea as to their position and their duties, or the character of their party. They were haunted with a nervous apprehension of that great bugbear, 'the people'—that bewildering title under which a miserable minority contrives to coerce and plunder the nation. They were ignorant that the millions of the nation required to be guided and encouraged, and that they were that nation's natural leaders, bound to marshal and to enlighten them. The Tories trembled at a coming

anarchy: what they had to apprehend was a rigid tyranny. They fancied themselves on the eve of a reign of terror, when they were about to sink under the sovereignty of a Council of Ten. The Tories in 1832 were avowedly no longer a practical party; they had no system and no object; they were passive and forlorn. They took their seats in the House of Commons after the Reform Act as the senate in the forum, when the city was entered by the Gauls, only to die." He was desirous of obtaining a seat in parliament to combat the machinations of the Whigs; his principles were those having for their end the fusion of aristocracy with democracy; on his committee were Tories as well as Radicals, and he candidly admitted that he asked the aid of both to bear him on to victory. "And now, sir," he proceeds, "for Mr. O'Connell. Mr. O'Connell in 1832 was in a very different situation to Mr. O'Connell in 1833. The *Globe*, which historically informs us that in 1832 I was to become a member of Mr. O'Connell's tail, forgets that at that period Mr. O'Connell had no tail, for this was previous to the first general election after the Reform Act. Mr. O'Connell was not then an advocate for the dismemberment of the empire, the destruction of the church, and the abolition of the House of Lords. His lips overflowed with patriotism, with almost Protestant devotion to the establishment, with almost English admiration for the constitution. Our contest at Wycombe was a very warm one—every vote was an object. A friend of mine, interested in my success, knowing that I was supported by that portion of the constituency styled Radical, applied to Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Hume, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to know whether they had any influence in Wycombe, and requested them to exercise it in my favour. They had none, and they expressed their regret in letters to this gentleman, who forwarded them to me at Wycombe, and my committee, consisting of as many Tories as Radicals, printed them."

Their support was accorded to him, not because they as Tories or Radicals had entirely agreed with him in all his opinions, but because they were united on the one vital question—hostility to the Whig interest. It had been asserted that he stood on Radical principles at High Wycombe; if so, why, he asks, did the Whigs oppose him as a Tory? He frankly avowed that he had advocated triennial parliaments and vote by ballot, because he then was of opinion that the only way to shatter the power of the Whigs was by frequent appeals to the country, and by preventing them from "exercising a usurious influence over the petty tradesmen who are their slaves and their victims" in the number of little towns the late Reform Bill had enfranchised. But the Whigs had now fallen to pieces; the balance of parties had been restored; and since it was no longer necessary to advocate the measures he had formerly advanced, he had allowed himself to abandon them. Still, it was false to assert that he had changed his principles. He held the same views at Taunton as he had at Wycombe. "I came forward on that occasion," he writes, "on precisely the same principles on which I had offered myself at Wycombe, but my situation was different. I was no longer an independent and isolated member of the political world. I had felt it my duty to become an earnest partizan. The Tory party had in this interval roused itself from its lethargy; it had profited by adversity; it had regained not a little of its original character and primary spirit; it had come to remember or to discover that it was the national party of the country; it recognized its duty to place itself at the head of the nation; it possessed the patriotic principles of Sir William Wyndham and Lord Bolingbroke, in whose writings I have ever recognized the most pure and the profoundest sources of political and constitutional wisdom; under the guidance of an eloquent and able leader the principles of primitive Toryism had again developed themselves,

and the obsolete associations which form no portion of that great patriotic scheme had been effectually discarded."

Mr. Disraeli failed, however, to be more successful at Taunton than he had been on the three previous occasions at Wycombe; he was defeated by Mr. Labouchere by a large majority.

Such is the history of the memorable O'Connell episode, to which allusion has so frequently been made in the course of Lord Beaconsfield's career. In the dispute, to our mind, no blame can be attached to the proceedings pursued by Mr. Disraeli. He held the views both of a Tory and a reformer, and he sought the support of Mr. Hume, Mr. Bulwer, and the agitator, to help him with the democratic party, as he sought the aid of the Duke of Chandos to assist him with the aristocratic party. The one broad ground he stood upon was hostility to the Whigs; if it can be shown that, whilst essaying to effect a fusion with the Tories and the Reformers, he was pandering to the policy of the Whigs—as O'Connell afterwards pandered—then most certainly he can be charged with inconsistency and apostacy. But throughout his whole political career, both in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords, the late leader of the Conservative party was the steadfast opponent of Whig principles and practices. Throughout his whole political career he was a Tory, and yet one who believed in the power and development of the working classes. His creed was ever the union of Toryism and Democracy to repel Whiggism, and the selfish and short-sighted policy of the middle classes. But even if it had been as his enemies allege, which is not the case, that Mr. Disraeli had advanced opinions in his youth which his maturer experience had called upon him to change or modify, is that so heinous and unusual an offence in political life? When we reflect upon Mr. Disraeli's whole parliamentary career—his undoubted patriotism, his generosity, when leader of the Opposition, to the government of the day, his

far-seeing policy, the beneficial measures he introduced; and then to have arrayed against these deeds of a brilliant past, the alleged inconsistencies of hot youth, which malice has raked up from the dust of forgetfulness—such charges really become too ludicrous for grave consideration! It is as if, when sailing on the bosom of some majestic river, a man were to look for flecks of mud, and disparage the stream because it was said to have its rise in some hidden, turbid rivulet.

Happily the fierce light of hate can beat upon the public life of Lord Beaconsfield, and fail to find there the faults, the compromises, the tergiversations of many of his predecessors. He never supported a measure when in power, and thwarted it when in opposition, as did Sir Robert Walpole when he entered upon his course of factious antagonism to Stanhope. He never appealed to a prime minister for preferment, and then, when refused, veered round and bitterly attacked the man he had petitioned, as did the first Pitt, when the great minister of peace declined to give him office. No sarcastic speaker could point to him as sitting on the same bench with men whom he had previously denounced, and whose policy he had disapproved of, as Pitt had pointed to Henry Fox, when he united with Newcastle, or as Cobden had pointed to Bernal Osborne, when he took his seat by the side of his "boa-constrictor" friend, Sir James Graham. He never agreed to serve under a man upon whose political actions he had at one time poured out all the vials of his wrathful indignation, as had Charles James Fox when he served under North, unlike—

"The rugged Thurlow, who with sullen scowl,
In surly mood at friend and foe will growl;
Of proud prerogative the stern support,"

he never intrigued with the enemy to keep him in office. He never behaved to any man as the Duke of Wellington behaved to Canning. He never acted towards any measure he had once supported as Peel

acted towards the cause of protection. He was never accused, as Lord Palmerston was accused, of ignoring the control of the crown as to the supervision of official correspondence. Nor was he ever charged, as had been Lord Melbourne and the late Lord Derby, with a culpable indifference to the business of public affairs.

Still if it were true—which it is not—that Mr. Disraeli began life as a Radical, and then went over to the enemy, is he the only man who has changed his political faith? Did not Charles James Fox begin as a Tory and end as the leader of the great Whig party? How often did the Duke of Wellington alter his opinions? How often did Sir Robert Peel alter his opinions? Was not Canning brought up under Whig protection, and did he not commence his parliamentary life as the adherent of Pitt? We know what the wits said of him at Brookes'—

"The turning of coats so common is grown,
That no one would think to attack it;
But no case until now was so flagrantly known
Of a schoolboy turning his jacket."

Was not Mr. Stanley a reformer, yet was not the late Earl of Derby the leader of the Tory party? Did not Lord Palmerston begin life as a Tory and then cross over to the Liberal benches? Did not the late Lord Lytton begin life as a Radical, and then end as a Conservative? Was not Sir Francis Burdett a Radical who afterwards became a Tory? And pray, we ask the question without implying anything offensive, what has been the career of him whom Macaulay described as "the rising hope" of stern, unbending Toryism?

The fact is, the study of political biography makes large calls upon the charity of our human nature, and, unless we feel ourselves capable of generously meeting these demands, we shall do wisely to abandon the subject altogether. We should not pay heed to the hot indignation of opposition, for it has as often happened as not that when the opposition has comfortably settled itself upon the Treasury benches,

what once excited its ire excites it no longer, and we see opponents content to pursue a not very dissimilar policy to that which, under less favourable circumstances, has met with their sternest disapproval. We should judge of a party, not by its views when out of office, for the simple fact that it is out of office, but by its conduct when in power. We should look kindly upon the inconsistencies of youthful political ambition, and upon its struggles, which may not, perhaps, always bear a close examination, to push itself through the crowd—reserving our judgment and the severity of our morality for a later date, when the aspirant has developed into the statesman. Remembering human nature, we should be more prone to forget, than to eternally recall, the unsavoury dealings of men desirous of entering parliament, or the intrigues practised by eager partizans to obtain office, and content ourselves with limiting our criticism to the conduct of such men, when they have once become enrolled as legislators, or have taken the oaths as advisers of the crown. We must be satisfied with viewing the race, and not watch too narrowly the details of the training.

Again, thwarted in his political ambition, Benjamin Disraeli once more turned his steps to the forsaken shrine of literature. Late in the year 1835, he published the pamphlet upon which he had been long engaged, and from which we have already quoted, entitled, "A Vindication of the English Constitution, in a Letter to a Noble and Learned Lord." The peer thus addressed was Lord Lyndhurst, who was quick to discern the great abilities of the young man, and between whom and the future statesman a warm friendship now subsisted. The objects of the pamphlet were to expound political philosophy, as opposed to the utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and his school, and to defend Tory opinions from many of the misconceptions with which they were surrounded. Readers of "Coningsby" and "Sybil" will find in the pages of this brilliant constitutional treatise

many of the theories and tenets with which they are familiar; that the monarchy should rest upon a democracy, the crown upon the people, each strengthening the other without the control of parliament; and that the personal power of the monarch should be the centre of our political system, restoring the authority and prerogative of the crown, weakened and restrained by parliamentary encroachments. We have the well-known attacks upon the Whigs, who sought to reduce the English monarch to the character of a Venetian doge, and to exchange the divine right of kings for the divine right of nobles. We listen to the oft-recurring arguments as to the exact position of the House of Commons in the framework of the constitution. It is not the house of the people, nor are its members the representatives of the people: it is "an estate of the realm, and the members of the House of Commons represent that estate." "We know," writes the author, "what happened to the country in the turbulent days before the Restoration, when the lower house, ceasing to be an estate, degenerated into an assembly of delegates of the people, and arrogantly declared that 'the people are the origin of all just power,' and that 'whatever is declared to be law by the House of Commons hath the force of law without the consent of the king or the House of Peers.' Never was tyranny more severe and exacting than when England was ruled by the people. It was 'the people' who established courts more infamous than the Star Chamber, who, to gratify their own petty revenge, seized upon such property as they desired, who cruelly tortured all whom they considered malignant, who opposed that great bulwark of our liberties—trial by jury—who introduced the excise, who raised the taxation of the country from £800,000 a-year to £7,000,000 a-year; and who, indeed, so harshly, so mischievously, and so incompetently ruled the country, that in order to free herself from 'the people she took refuge in the arms of a military despot." Such was the condition of the

nation when governed by a "vulgar and ignoble oligarchy." Having shown that to be ruled by the divine right of the House of Commons is the most pernicious of all the various forms of control, the writer proceeds to argue in favour of the hereditary principle of the House of Lords, and arrives at the conclusion that such a chamber is "suited to the genius of the country, in harmony with all its political establishments, and founded not only on an intimate acquaintance with the national character, but a profound knowledge of human nature in general." Then dealing with the question of the two great parties into which English political warfare is divided, Mr. Disraeli contends for his favourite theory that the Tory party is essentially the national and democratic party, whilst the Whigs must always be the exclusive and aristocratic party; and here he boldly avows that since 1831 the political power of the Tories has only been maintained "by a series of democratic measures of the greatest importance and most comprehensive character." This statement affords him an opportunity to pass a high eulogium upon the character of his great political hero, Lord Bolingbroke. In the early part of the eighteenth century, the Tory party required re-organization; "and as it is in the nature of human affairs," writes Mr. Disraeli, "that the individual that is required shall not long be wanting, so in the season of which I am treating, arose a man remarkable in an illustrious age, who, with the splendour of an organizing genius, settled the confused and discordant materials of English faction, and reduced them into a clear and systematic order. This was Lord Bolingbroke. Girted with that fiery imagination, the teeming fertility of whose inventive resources is as necessary to a great statesman or a great general, as to a great poet, the ablest writer and the most accomplished orator of his age, that rare union that in a country of free parliaments and a free press, insures to its possessor the privilege of exercising a

constant influence over the mind of his country, that rare union that has rendered Burke so memorable; blending with that intuitive knowledge of his race which creative minds alone enjoy, all the wisdom which can be derived from literature, and a comprehensive experience of human affairs; no one was better qualified to be the minister of a free and powerful nation than Henry St. John; and destiny at first appeared to combine with nature in the elevation of his fortunes.

"Opposed to the Whigs from principle, for an oligarchy is hostile to genius, and recoiling from the Tory tenets, which his unprejudiced and vigorous mind taught him at the same time to dread and to condemn, Lord Bolingbroke at the outset of his career incurred the common-place imputation of insincerity and inconsistency, because in an age of unsettled parties, with principles contradictory of their conduct, he maintained that vigilant and meditative independence which is the privilege of an original and determined spirit. In the earlier years of his career he meditated over the formation of a new party—that dream of youthful ambition in a perplexed and discordant age, but destined in English politics to be never more substantial than a vision. More experienced in political life, he became aware that he had only to choose between the Whigs and the Tories; and his sagacious intellect, not satisfied with the superficial character of these celebrated divisions, penetrated their interior and essential qualities, and discovered, in spite of all the affectation of popular sympathy on one side, and of admiration of arbitrary power on the other, that this choice was in fact a choice between oligarchy and democracy. From the moment that Lord Bolingbroke, in becoming a Tory, embraced the national cause, he devoted himself absolutely to his party: all the energies of his Protean mind were lavished in their service; and although the ignoble prudence of the Whig minister restrained him from advocating the cause of the nation in the senate, it was

his inspiring pen that made Walpole tremble in the recesses of the treasury, and in a series of writings unequalled in our literature for their spirited patriotism, their just and profound views, and the golden eloquence in which they are expressed, eradicated from Toryism all those absurd and odious doctrines which Toryism had adventitiously adopted, clearly developed its essential and permanent character, discarded *jure divino*, demolished passive obedience, threw to the winds the doctrine of non-resistance, placed the abolition of James and the accession of George on their right basis, and in the complete re-organization of the public mind, laid the foundation for the future accession of the Tory party to power, and to that popular and triumphant career which must ever await the policy of an administration inspired by the spirit of our free and ancient institutions."

This eloquent passage naturally suggests a comparison between the two men. Like Bolingbroke, Mr. Disraeli was the consistent foe of the Whigs. Like Bolingbroke, "he meditated over the formation of a new party," he made his choice "between oligarchy and democracy," and, devoting "all the energies of his Protean mind," he laid the foundation for the future accession of the Tory party to power. Like Bolingbroke, he was gifted with "the splendour of an organizing genius," a "fiery imagination," and a brain teeming with "inventive resources." What Bolingbroke did for the Tory party in his own day, so did Mr. Disraeli after the repeal of the Corn Laws; he "settled the confused and discordant materials of English faction, and reduced them into a clear and systematic order." Bolingbroke was brought up as a Dissenter, Mr. Disraeli as a Jew; yet both men were staunch supporters of the Anglican Church, and firmly upheld the necessity of the union between Church and State. Both men were animated by the keenest desire for the welfare of England; and their sense of patriotism ever caused them to keep a vigilant eye upon the machinations of the

enemy. As Bolingbroke watched the movements of Spain, so did Lord Beaconsfield watch the movements of Russia. The parallel is, however, happily not complete—there is nothing in the career of Mr. Disraeli to suggest a comparison with the intrigues set on foot by Bolingbroke when out of office; and the ending of the two men is very different, the one going down to his grave soured, disheartened, and discredited: the other honoured, trusted, and in the full glory of his power and popularity.

In these days when men are seeking to dismember the empire, and to praise republican institutions at the expense of our own constitution, we shall do wisely to remember the grand words with which Mr. Disraeli concludes his letter to Lord Lyndhurst.* “If neither ancient ages,” he writes, “nor the more recent experience of our newer time, can supply us with a parallel instance of a free government, founded on the broadest basis of popular rights, yet combining with democratic liberty aristocratic security and monarchical convenience; if the refined spirit of Greece—if the great Roman soul—if the brilliant genius of feudal Italy—alike failed in realizing this great result, let us cling with increased devotion to the matchless creation of our ancestors, and honour, with still deeper feelings of gratitude and veneration, the English constitution. That constitution, my lord, established civil equality in a rude age, and anticipated by centuries in its beneficent practice the sublime theories of modern philosophy; having made us equal, it has kept us free. If it has united equality with freedom, so also it has connected freedom with glory. It has established an empire, which combines the durability of Rome with the

adventure of Carthage. It has, at the same time, secured us the most skilful agriculture, the most extended commerce, the most ingenious manufactures, victorious armies, and invincible fleets. Nor has the intellectual might of England, under its fostering auspices, been less distinguished than its imperial spirit, its manly heart, or its national energy. The authors of England have formed the mind of Europe, and stamped the breathing impression of their genius on the vigorous character of a new world. Under that constitution the administration of justice has become so pure, that its exercise has realized the dreams of some Utopian romance. That constitution has struggled successfully with the Papacy, and finally, and for the first time, proved the compatibility of sectarian toleration and national orthodoxy. It has made private ambition conducive to public welfare, it has baffled the machinations of factions and of parties; and when those more violent convulsions have arisen, from whose periodic visitations no human institutions can be exempt, the English constitution has survived the moral earthquake and outlived the mental hurricane, and been sedulous that the natural course of our prosperity should only be disturbed and not destroyed. Finally, it has secured for every man the career to which he is adapted, and the reward to which he is entitled; it has summoned your lordship to preside over courts and parliaments, to maintain law by learning, and to recommend wisdom by eloquence; and it has secured to me, in common with every subject of this realm, a right—the enjoyment of which I would not exchange for—

‘The ermined stole,

The starry breast and coroneted brow,’—
the right of expressing my free thoughts to a free people.”

The Melbourne government, under its sauntering, easy-going premier, was pursuing the tenour of its way, by blundering in its various attempts at legislation, and irritating all classes which wanted their

* It is a matter of some surprise that this pamphlet has not been republished. It is now very scarce, indeed, so scarce, that the only copy I could find was in the British Museum. Our National Library does not, however, appear to think very highly of the work, since it does not honour it with a separate existence, but binds it up with a volume of inferior and uninteresting essays. There are passages in the “Vindication of the English Constitution” as novel and brilliant as anything that Mr. Disraeli ever wrote.

special interests to be effectively dealt with. Another Junius was now to appear on the scene and pass in review the characters in, and the measures of, the cabinet. During the first months of the year 1836 there appeared in the *Times* newspaper a series of letters signed "Runnymede." These stinging epistles have never been publicly acknowledged by the late Lord Beaconsfield; but there can be little doubt as to whom their authorship is due. Their literary finish, the keenness of their sarcasm, their cutting invective, their wit, their smartness, all reveal the author of "Coningsby" and "Sybil," and the politician who illumined many a dreary debate by those trenchant personalities which hit off a character in a phrase, or summed up a measure in an epigram. From the full quiver of these "Runnymede Letters" let us select a few barbed shafts. As head of the cabinet, Lord Melbourne is the chief target, and certainly the broad surface he presents for hostile criticism is not spared. He has "sauntered away the destinies of a nation, and lounged away the glory of an empire;" he is incapable of rousing himself from "the embraces of that siren Desidia," to whose fatal influences he is no less a slave than was our second Charles; as a minister he is useless, let him therefore be dismissed, and find an asylum in the gardens of Hampton Court, "where he might saunter away the remaining years of his now ludicrous existence, sipping the last novel of Paul de Kock whilst lounging over a sundial." As was the prime minister, so were his colleagues. Lord John Russell, the author of the "feeblest tragedy in our language," the "feeblest romance in our literature," and the "feeblest political essay on record," has had the misfortune to be born "with a strong ambition and a weak intellect." If a foreigner were told that such a man was the leader of the House of Commons, he might then understand "how the Egyptians worshipped an insect." Lord Brougham had directed many a bitter attack against Mr. Disraeli, his

speeches, and his works; he was now in his turn to feel the lash. "I am informed that your lordship," writes Runnymede, "is occupied in a translation of your treatise of 'Natural Theology' into German on the Hamiltonian system. The translation of a work on a subject of which you know little into a tongue of which you know nothing, seems the climax of those fantastic freaks of ambitious superficiality which our lively neighbours describe by a finer term than 'quackery.'" Lord Palmerston, the dandy of the cabinet, is called "the Sporus of politics, cajoling France with an airy compliment, and menacing Russia with a perfumed cane;" he is "the Lord Fanny of diplomacy" and the "great Apollo of aspiring understrappers;" he has "the smartness of an attorney's clerk and the intrigues of a Greek of the Lower Empire;" he reminds one "of a favourite footman on easy terms with his mistress," and his sense of political honour is thus summed up, "You owe the Whigs great gratitude, my lord, and therefore I think you will betray them." The measures of the cabinet naturally come in for their share of abuse. Whiggery is the mighty dragon "depopulating our fields, wasting our pleasant places, poisoning our fountains, and menacing our civilization." But its end is nigh at hand, "the reign of delusion is about to close." "The man who obtains property by false pretences is transported. Is the party that obtains power by the same means to be saved harmless? Lord Melbourne has established a new colony in Australia; it wants settlers. Let the cabinet emigrate; in the antipodes they will find a home suited to their tastes and characters. The land where the rivers are salt; where the quadrupeds have fins and the fish feet; where everything is confused, discordant, and irregular, is indicated by Providence as the fitting scene of Whig government."

In marked contrast to this bitter badinage is the tribute paid by the writer to the position and character of Sir Robert Peel. The Melbourne government, by its incom-

petency, and the tenacity with which it clung to office, had disgusted all classes. "Never," cried Lord Lyndhurst, addressing his brother peers, "was the state of business in the other house of parliament in the situation in which it was at present—never did a government so neglect so important a part of its duty, that which it had to discharge in parliament, as the government had done during the last five months. The noble viscount [Melbourne] and his colleagues were utterly powerless. They were powerless alike in that and the other house; they were utterly inefficient and incompetent as servants of the crown; and he must add, also, they were equally powerless, incapable, and inefficient as regarded the people." But in proportion as Lord Melbourne had lost the favour of the court, the support of the House of Commons, and the confidence of the country, Sir Robert Peel had risen in the opinion of all classes. He was regarded as "the coming man." "In your chivalry alone," writes the author of the "Runnymede" epistles, "is our hope. Clad in the panoply of your splendid talents and your spotless character, we feel assured that you will subdue this unnatural and unnational monster, and that we may yet see sedition, and treason, and rapine, rampant as they may have of late figured, quail before your power and prowess." A comparison is then instituted between Peel, who at once resigned when he saw he was putting in jeopardy the royal prerogative, and Melbourne, who remained in power in spite of all his past blunders and mismanagement. "What a contrast," exclaims "Runnymede," "does the administration of Sir Robert Peel afford to that of Lord Melbourne! No selfish views, no family aggrandizement, no family jobs, no nepotism! Contrast the serene retirement of Drayton and the repentant solitude of Howick! Contrast the statesman cheered after his factious defeat by the sympathy of a nation with the coroneted Necker, the worn-out Machiavelli, wringing his helpless hands over his heart in remorseful despair,

and looking up with a sigh at his scowling ancestors! Never did Pitt, in the plenitude of his power, enjoy more cordial confidence than that now extended to Sir Robert Peel by every section of the Conservative party. Then, at the head of his united following, let him go forward and rout the Whig camp, already harassed by its divided interests and intestine jealousies." "We look to you," appeals "Runnymede," "with hope and confidence; you have a noble duty to fulfil: let it be nobly done. You have a great task to execute: achieve it with a great spirit. Rescue your sovereign from an unconstitutional thralldom—rescue an august senate, which has already fought the battle of the people—rescue our national church, which your opponents hate—our venerable constitution, at which they scoff; but above all, rescue that mighty body of which all these great classes and institutions are but some of the constituent and essential parts—rescue the Nation."

Shortly after the appearance of these severe strictures in the leading journal of the day, Mr. Disraeli published the novel which is, perhaps, the favourite among the fair sex of all his works. The border line between the sublime and the ridiculous is, we know, very fine; but in the love story of "Henrietta Temple," the sentiment, though sometimes carried to a dangerous extreme, never sinks into the foolish or the contemptible. It enjoys the reputation of being the most perfect love tale in our language; the passion is fervid without coarseness, the hero is tender without effeminacy, whilst the heroine responds to the ardour of her suitor without ever degenerating into mawkishness or sickly gush. It is almost the only love story of pure affection which men read or care to read. The object of its author is "to trace the development of that passion that is at once the principle and the end of our existence; that passion compared to whose delights all the other gratifications of our nature—wealth, and power, and fame—sink into insignificance; and which, nevertheless, by

the ineffable beneficence of our Creator, are open to His creatures of all conditions, qualities, and climes." In this romance we perceive the influences of his foreign origin upon the author. An Englishman would not have dared to write such a book; the fear of ridicule would have ever been before his eyes, paralyzing his passion, and causing his rhapsodies to sink into bathos. He would no more have written "Henrietta Temple" than he would, Teuton-like, indulge in the promptings of affection in public. A Frenchman would have turned the love passages into impropriety, or have marred them by a repellent artificiality. A German would have composed the tale after the teaching of his sentimental school, and when he did not excite laughter by his imbecility, would have wearied by his dullness. But the Semitic instincts—for the Hebrew is sprung from a race as full of passion and poetry as the Celt, yet with all the respect of the Teuton for domestic purity, whilst his egotism and self-reliance render him often somewhat impervious to the fear of ridicule—came to the aid of Mr. Disraeli in the composition of this work, and made him passionate without sensuality, imaginative without improbability, and affectionate without extravagance. "Venetia" soon followed "Henrietta Temple." It has for its central thought the intense love of a daughter for her unknown father, and reproduces many of the incidents that occurred in the lives of Byron and Shelley. There is little plot in the story; but as a study of character it is one of the most thoughtful and best worked-out of all the novels of the author.

And now, once more, was Mr. Disraeli to essay to enter the parliamentary arena: this time to have his efforts crowned with success. William the Fourth, after a brief illness, had passed into the "eternal silence," and according to the constitutional custom when a new sovereign ascends the throne, a general election ensued. An opportunity offered itself to Mr. Disraeli to contest Maidstone. The borough possessed two

seats; Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the senior member, and a stout Tory, was exceedingly popular, and his return was assured; his colleague, however, was a Whig, and much disliked in the town. Mr. Disraeli was asked to stand as the second Tory candidate, and he at once hurried into Kent to meet the constituency. His address was issued on the same lines as his previous ones delivered at High Wycombe and Taunton. He announced himself as "an uncompromising adherent to the ancient constitution, which was once the boast of our fathers, and is still the blessing of their children;" he was convinced that "the reformed religion, as by law established in this country, is at the same time the best guarantee for religious toleration and orthodox purity;" he would "watch with vigilant solicitude over the fortunes of the British farmer," since he sincerely believed that "his welfare is the surest and most permanent basis of general prosperity;" he was in favour of the abolition of church rates, provided he could see his way to some substitute; he opposed the harsh administration of the poor-law, since relief was not a matter of charity, but of right, to the poor deprived by the great families of the monastic lands; and as at Wycombe, so at Taunton, and so now at Maidstone, he maintained the same views he had always advocated. "Here I am, gentlemen," he said, "filling the same place, preaching the same doctrine, and supporting the same institutions as I did at High Wycombe." His opponent was Colonel Perronet Thompson, the author of the "Corn-law Catechism," and a former proprietor of the Radical *Westminster Review*. The contest was actively carried on by both sides; but the influence of the popular Mr. Wyndham Lewis made itself felt in favour of his new colleague, and the ultimate victory of Mr. Disraeli was never in doubt. Mr. Robarts, the disliked member, who had represented Maidstone in the Whig interest in seven successive parliaments, anticipated the verdict of the constituency, and retired before

the nomination day. At a late hour on the polling day a fourth candidate, a Mr. Perry, was started, with no other result, however, than to render himself supremely ridiculous. When the votes were counted up, it was seen that Maidstone had declared itself with no uncertain voice against the Whig government. At the close of the poll, the numbers were :—Lewis, 782 ; Disraeli, 668 ; Thompson, 529 ; and the redoubtable Perry, 25.

The career of Mr. Disraeli is that of a man

who was never suppressed by defeat, who was never disheartened by failure. Many a man anxious to embrace parliamentary honours would, after the frequent rejections Mr. Disraeli had received, have retired from the struggle in disgust, and have abandoned all ideas of a life in the House of Commons. Not so the future Earl of Beaconsfield. He worked, he watched, he waited, and at last his patience was rewarded by being returned as one of the Conservative members for Maidstone.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE HOUSE.

DURING the present generation the House of Commons, owing to the development of the reforms that have been effected in its constitution, has lost many of the characteristics which it formerly possessed. It is now a practical, business-like, but, it must be confessed, a somewhat dull assembly. The elements of youth and wit are conspicuous by their absence, whilst municipal eloquence and vestry-like personalities reign in their stead. Before the abolition of nomination boroughs, a young man of great ability—like the second Pitt, Canning, Macaulay, and others—was taken by the hand by some powerful minister, and launched upon a parliamentary career in the easiest and most inexpensive fashion. The leaders of the great parties, who swayed the opinions of parliament, were always on the watch for talent that might serve their political ends. Many a young man by his clever speeches at the debating-club of his university, by a happy pamphlet, or by a bitter and opportune squib, found himself safely seated on the green benches of the House of Commons as the representative of a borough in the hands of a powerful lord or of a large-acred squire, without his election having cost him more than the issue of his address or the delivery of a few speeches before a sympathetic audience. Commerce had not then assumed the high position it now occupies, nor had the banker's book usurped the influence of the pedigree chart. The lower house was, in a large measure, filled by the representatives of the landed gentry, who knew little of science or the laws of political economy, but who shuddered if they heard a false quantity, and piqued themselves that they were as familiar with the classics as a priest is with his breviary.

A few merchants of the highest class, a few successful lawyers, a few Irish, then as now not held in much esteem, and several clever young men who were the little deities of their university, completed the list. The constitution of such an assembly, though it might not offer the same scope as now exists for the exercise of those talents which especially appeal to what Mr. Disraeli called the "parochial mind," yet afforded every opportunity for the display of culture. A classical and a literary flavour penetrated the parliamentary eloquence of those days. A speech delivered in the House was a solemn undertaking, and not to be lightly entered upon; its periods were carefully rehearsed; its matter was introduced and dismissed in stately terms worthy of the occasion; the gestures and attitudes of the speaker were studied with a Chatham-like view to effect; whilst his words were listened to by an assembly which never forgot, even in the most feverish times of party heat, that it represented the gentry of England. Then on the following day the details brought forward were fully reported and discussed in the leading journals. Eloquence was thus the most powerful weapon that could be wielded in parliamentary warfare, and it consequently became the favourite and most cultivated of all studies. To be a showy speaker or a ready debater, no matter how incorrect or superficial the sentiments expressed, was to be on the high road to the cabinet; whilst the erudite and the thinker, who could never address a few words to the Speaker without confusion, were completely ignored.

The Reform Bills and the development of the newspaper press have, however, ushered in a new state of things. The abolition of

pocket-boroughs has rendered it impossible for clever but impecunious youth to obtain a seat in parliament. The competition that arises upon every vacancy in the House of Commons, and the rigid measure now most properly dealt out to those guilty of bribery and corruption, make it a matter of necessity at the present day for the candidate for parliamentary honours to be not only a rich man, but one who has also long been courting the favours of a constituency. Those who derive their wealth from industry seldom have attained to fortune till past middle age, and consequently the House of Commons will become more and more the assembly of elderly men; in other words, more grave, more practical, more dull. From its wealth, from its social ambition, and from its business habits, the mercantile element must always be a prominent feature in the lower house; and when men, often deprived in their youth of the advantages of education, betake themselves late in life to a new calling, they have little sympathy with the charms and graces of a cultivated eloquence: with them it is only so much verbiage interfering with "business." Again, owing to the extension of the franchise, members have been returned to parliament who, under less happy circumstances, could never have hoped to have had a seat in that assembly—men who, regarding themselves as the representatives of the masses, do all in their power, by their bigoted ignorance, their spiteful class-hate, and their offensive maintenance of the prejudices they call ideas, to prove themselves worthy of their constituencies. The squire, the successful lawyer, and the naval or military officer, will always have his place in the House of Commons; but instead of being, as he once was, the House itself, he is now only an element in it, and an element which every session will more and more have to retire to the background. By such a body of men—shrewd, hard, economical, practical, and with the education of the academy rather than of the university—oratory is an influence little felt. A speech

now in the House of Commons—save by one of its leading members—is no great event. Before it has been delivered, its matter has been discounted by the newspapers; it is listened to with impatience; and the next morning is but curtly alluded to in the principal journals. To be active on committees; to know your subject thoroughly, however badly, even ungrammatically, such knowledge may be expressed; to be the possessor of a sound common sense—are now of far more use in advancing a politician to office, than all the eloquence of a Bolingbroke, or the brilliancy of a Canning. Oratory, like poetry, requires an audience for its creation and cultivation; where it has no audience, it perishes. During the last forty years parliament has seen only two great orators arise who were not within its walls at the date of the Maidstone election.

These remarks fail to apply to the House of Commons in which Mr. Disraeli first took his seat. Seldom has such an array of talent been presented as was to be found in the popular chamber at St. Stephen's in the session of 1837. On the treasury bench sat the able and versatile Lord John Russell, the leader of the Whig party in the House of Commons, and who then held the seals as secretary of state for the home department. Near him was the foreign secretary, Lord Palmerston, the popular man of fashion, ready in debate, witty in retort, but who had not as yet given promise of the statesmanship he was afterwards to display. The polished Lord Morpeth, who held office as chief secretary for Ireland, and Spring Rice, the chancellor of the exchequer, were also occupants of the ministerial bench. Among the supporters of the government were Lytton Bulwer, the poet and novelist, then a Radical of the most pronounced type; the courteous and fluent Lord Leveson; the dandy Sir William Molesworth, the forerunner of the philosophical Radical; "honest Tom Duncombe," the member for Finsbury; Hume, the economist; Grote, the historian; Lord Ashley, the philanthropist; Charles Villiers,

of corn law fame; the witty Charles Buller; and O'Connell, with his eloquent but now almost forgotten lieutenant, Richard Lalor Shiel. On the Tory side of the House were Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Opposition; the present Mr. Gladstone, then member for Newark; Lord Stanley, "whose knowledge of parliamentary debate resembled an instinct;" Sir Francis Burdett, who had deserted the Whigs; and other members of lesser note. It was before such an audience that the member for Maidstone was to rise to make his maiden speech.

As malice has exaggerated the disadvantages under which Mr. Disraeli laboured in early life, so it has been pleased to exaggerate the collapse of Mr. Disraeli's first parliamentary effort. As a matter of fact the much talked of maiden speech was not a failure in the generally accepted sense of the word." The member for Maidstone, when he rose first to address the House, did not fail as Sir Robert Walpole failed, as Canning failed, as Grattan, Sheridan, and Erskine failed, and the rest, who became nervous and confused when passing through a similar ordeal. The speech that Mr. Disraeli delivered on that memorable occasion is both clever and eloquent; even his most malignant biographer admits that it was far above the parliamentary average. The speech failed, not from the matter contained in it, but partly from an organized opposition and partly from the prejudices excited in the honest English mind by the attitudes and appearance of the speaker. When a suitor addresses a packed jury, and at the same time creates a feeling against him in the mind of the court, he is not likely to obtain a favourable verdict. This was Mr. Disraeli's position. The Irish who supported O'Connell—and who loved, and still love, whenever the occasion prompts, to introduce into the House of Commons the elements of a fair in their turbulent country—jeered and howled the moment Mr. Disraeli rose to his legs, and did their utmost to shriek him down. Nor did the

appearance of the young member create a favourable impression among the civilized portion of the assembly. In addressing an eminently English audience—an audience hating instinctively anything theatrical and foreign—Mr. Disraeli by his garments and his gestures at once repelled the sympathies of his hearers. He stood on the floor of the House showily dressed in a bottle-green frock coat, an extensive white waistcoat, trousers of a vulgar fancy pattern, and round his neck a black tie, which effectually concealed any collar he might have worn. A network of glittering chains covered the front of his chest. His face was deadly pale, and his hair, combed away from the right temple, fell in bunches of well-oiled ringlets over his left cheek. As he addressed his audience he spoke with great rapidity, moving his body from one side to another, and throwing his hands out, and then quickly drawing them in again. He looked like a sporting Israelite who had studied elocution on the boards of a third-rate French theatre.

The occasion of the speech was not a very important one. It appears that Mr. Spottiswoode, the queen's printer, had, during the recess, started a subscription to provide Protestant candidates with money to contest Irish constituencies, and also to supply funds for the prosecution of petitions against such Roman Catholic members as should be returned. The subscription was supported by several members of parliament, and among them by Sir Francis Burdett, who had taken every opportunity of informing the world that he had contributed twenty pounds. Such proceedings were warmly resented by the Irish, who looked upon the subscription as a conspiracy to suppress the political and religious liberties of Ireland. When parliament met, the matter came before the House. On December 7, 1837, Smith O'Brien, who had been returned for the county of Limerick, but whose seat had been petitioned against, moved that "a select committee be appointed to inquire into the allegations

contained in the petition presented by William Smith O'Brien, complaining of the subscriptions which had been raised to encourage the presentation of petitions against Irish members, and of the conduct of a member of the House in having contributed to such subscription." Lytton Bulwer supported the petition. Sir William Follett, the member for Exeter, defended the subscription on the ground that Smith O'Brien was as much a representative of the people of England as of the electors of Limerick. Sir Francis Burdett denounced O'Connell as encouraging assassination, and declared that there were many people living in Ireland under a system of terrorism "more powerful and dreadful than that which existed under Robespierre in France;" then he concluded with the charge that always struck home to the guilty conscience of the agitator, that he was making patriotism "a source of gain." O'Connell replied in a long speech, which fills several columns of "Hansard," attacking the Tories with his usual coarse vehemence, and accusing them of insulting the people of Ireland by this subscription. As soon as the tribune had sat down, Mr. Disraeli rose to his feet. He had vowed that they should "meet at Philippi," and the meeting had taken place. Extracts from the speech he delivered on that occasion have frequently been given, but it has seldom appeared in its entirety. Let the reader judge for himself whether it was the failure malice has represented it.

"I trust the House," he began, "will extend to me that gracious indulgence which is usually allowed to one who solicits its attention for the first time. I have, however, had sufficient experience of the critical spirit which pervades the House, to know and to feel how much I stand in need of that indulgence—an indulgence of which I will prove myself to be not unworthy, by promising not to abuse it.

"The hon. and learned member for Dublin (Mr. O'Connell) has taunted the hon. baronet, the member for North Wiltshire (Sir Francis Burdett) with having uttered a long, ram-

bling, wandering, jumbling speech. Now, I must say—and I can assure the hon. and learned gentleman that I paid the utmost attention to the remarks which flowed from him—that it seems to me that the hon. and learned gentleman took a hint from the hon. baronet in the oration which the hon. and learned gentleman has just addressed to the House. There is scarcely a single subject connected with Ireland which the hon. and learned member did not introduce into his rhetorical medley. The hon. and learned member for Dublin also taunted the hon. and learned member for Exeter (Sir W. Follett) with travelling out of the record of the present debate, while he himself travelled back seven hundred years, though the House is engaged in the discussion of events which have taken place within the last few months.

"The hon. and learned member has favoured the House with an allusion to poor laws for Ireland. [*No, no.*] Perhaps I may be wrong; but, at all events, there was an allusion to the Irish Corporation Bill. I do not pretend accurately to remember all the topics which the hon. and learned member introduced into his speech; but, if no reference was made by the hon. and learned gentleman to the subject of Irish poor laws, at least there was a dissertation upon the measure relating to the municipal corporations of Ireland. Is that subject relative to the debate before the House?

"I will not allude—I will spare the feelings of the hon. and learned member in that respect—to the subscriptions which the hon. and learned member told the House have not been successful on his side; but that circumstance may account for the bitterness with which he spoke of the successful efforts of the much-vilified Mr. Spottiswoode. I was, indeed, much inclined to ask the hon. member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien), if he attended the meeting at which it was expected that every Liberal member would subscribe £50 to the protection fund. I thought that perhaps the hon. member could have given some curious information upon that subject; that though there may have

been nearly £3000 to begin with, there is now nothing in the exchequer, and that this project of majestic mendicancy has now wholly vanished. The hon. and learned member for Dublin has announced that the Spottiswoode subscription is a Protestant subscription. That it is supported by many Protestants nobody can attempt to deny; but if the hon. and learned member means to say that it is a subscription established for the particular object of supporting a Protestant faction against the Catholic people, I beg to remark that I see nothing at all to justify that supposition. It may be a Protestant, but it is essentially a defensive fund. The hon. and learned member for Dublin talked of the clergymen of the Church of England subscribing to this fund, and contrasted their conduct with that of the priests of his church; but I defy the hon. and learned member to produce a single instance of tyrannical interference on the part of the Protestant clergy at all similar, or in the least degree analogous, to those acts which are imputed to the clergy of the Catholic church. If the hon. and learned member doubts what I am saying, let him refer to the volume of evidence taken before the intimidation committee, and the hon. member will see that from Cornwall to Yorkshire no case has occurred that bears a comparison to the occurrences in Ireland, and that I am fully justified in the statements I make. The object of the subscription entered into was to procure justice for the Protestant constituencies and the Protestant proprietors of Ireland, those constituencies and those proprietors being unable to obtain justice single-handed.

"Hon. members know very well that a landlord in Ireland has been told by his tenants that they could not vote for him because their priest had denounced him from their altar. They know very well that when it was attempted to reinforce the strength of the Protestant constituency in the registration courts, some revising or assistant barrister from the Castle of Dublin was easily found to baffle it, and thus they

were forced on to their last resource and refuge—to a committee of this House.

"Now, is this a petition which has the downfall of the Catholics for its object? For my part, I think that the facts which have been brought before the notice of the intimidation committee perfectly justify the use of the epithets which have been employed in the original circular or manifesto of Mr. Spottiswoode. [*Murmurs.*]

"I shall not trouble the House at any length. I do not affect to be insensible to the difficulty of my position, and I shall be very glad to receive indulgence even from the hon. members opposite. If, however, hon. gentlemen do not wish to hear me, I will sit down without a murmur.

"I shall confine myself to an attempt to bring back the subject to the point which is really at issue. I cannot comprehend why a considerable body of Her Majesty's subjects, respectable not only for their numbers, but for their independence and integrity, should be held up to scorn and odium by the hon. and learned member for Dublin, for the commission of an act, the legality of which he did not presume to question, of the propriety of which they are as competent judges as that hon. and learned member, and of which, after what he has himself confessed, the hon. and learned member ought to be the last to question the delicacy. I have examined the list of contributors as well as the hon. and learned member for Dublin, and with a more than ordinary degree of interest, arising from the fact that the town which I represent has contributed a larger proportion of the fund than any other part of England, and I do not find that the subscribers principally consist of members of the aristocracy. With very few exceptions, they are to be found among the middle classes—men of moderate opinions and of a temperate tone of mind—men, in fact, who seldom step out of the sphere of their private virtues—men, as hon. gentlemen who have examined these lists must know, who seldom partake of the excitement created by the conflict of parties, and

are rarely inflamed by the passions which agitate the political world. I must say that I think it a very strange thing that so large a body of individuals, many of whom are constitutional reformers, many of whom, until very lately, supported Her Majesty's government—I must repeat that I consider it would be very hard, very unjust, very impolitic, to appoint a committee of inquiry, which would be equivalent to a verdict against these individuals, without first inquiring what were the feelings which induced them to pursue the line of conduct they have adopted. I would remind the House that these individuals, many of whom supported the Reform Bill, may have entertained hopes in reference to the working of that measure, which, like the hopes cherished by some hon. gentlemen opposite, may have been disappointed. They may have entertained an expectation that nomination would be at an end, that the stain of borough-mongering would be wiped out, and that not a remnant of the system would remain in a reformed parliament. But when they found that the stain of borough-mongering assumed a deeper and darker hue, that seats were openly bought and sold, and that a system of intimidation was organized, to which the riots that even under the old system exhibited the more flagrant features of electoral operations, were peaceable—when they found that this was the case, they perhaps thought that it was time to bring matters to a head.

"I have but one more observation to make, and I confess I am rather anxious to make that observation, as it will give me the first opportunity which has been afforded me of saying something with respect to Her Majesty's government. [*Renewed murmurs.*]

"I wish I could induce the House to give me five minutes. It is not much. I stand here to-night, not formally, but in some degree virtually, as the representative of a considerable number of members of Parliament. [*Loud laughter.*]

"Now, why smile? Why envy me? Why not let me enjoy that reflection, if

only for one night? Do you forget that band of 158 new members, that ingenuous and inexperienced band, to whose unsophisticated minds the right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer (Mr. Spring Rice) addressed himself early in the session, in those dulcet tones of winning pathos which have proved so effective?

"I know that considerable misconception exists in the minds of many of that class of members on the opposition side of the House in reference to the conduct of Her Majesty's government with respect to elections. I will not taunt the noble lord opposite with the opinions which are avowed by his immediate followers; but certain views were entertained and certain calculations were made with respect to those elections about the time when the bell of our cathedral announced the death of our monarch. We had all then heard of the projects said to be entertained by the government, and a little accurate information on the subject would be very acceptable, particularly to the new members on the opposition side of the House. We had been told that reaction was a discovery that only awoke derision, that the grave of Toryism was dug, and that the funeral obsequies of Toryism might be celebrated without any fear of its resuscitation, that the much-vilified Peel parliament was blown to the winds, when Mr. Hudson rushed into the chambers of the Vatican.

"I do not impute these sanguine views to the noble lord himself, for he has subsequently favoured the public with a manifesto, from which it would appear that Toryism cannot be so easily defeated. It was, however, vaunted that there would be a majority of one hundred, which might, upon great occasions, be expanded to 125 or 130. [*Uproar and cries of 'Question.'*] That was the question. We wish to know the simple fact whether, with that majority in the distance, they then thought of an alteration in the Grenville Act,* and whether

* The principle of the Grenville Act was to select committees for the trial of election petitions by lot.

it was then supposed that impartial tribunals might be obtained for the trial of election petitions. [*Renewed murmurs.*]

"If hon. gentlemen think this fair, I will submit. I would not do so to others, that is all. [*Laughter.*] Nothing is so easy as to laugh. I wish before I sit down to show the House clearly their position.

"When the House remembers that, in spite of the support of the hon. and learned member for Dublin and his well-disciplined band of patriots, there was a little shyness exhibited by former supporters of Her Majesty's government—when they recollect the 'new loves' and the 'old loves,' in which so much of passion and recrimination was mixed up, between the noble Tityrus of the treasury bench and the learned Daphne of Liskeard (Mr. Charles Buller), notwithstanding the *amantium iræ* has resulted, as I had always expected, in the *amoris integratio*, notwithstanding that political duel has been fought, in which more than one shot was interchanged, but in which recourse was had to the secure arbitrament of blank cartridges—notwithstanding emancipated Ireland and enslaved England, the noble lord might wave in one hand the keys of St. Peter, and in the other—[*the shouts that followed drowned the conclusion of the sentence.*]

"Now, Mr. Speaker, see the philosophical prejudice of man. I would certainly gladly hear a cheer, even though it came from the lips of a political opponent. *I am not at all surprised at the reception which I have experienced. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. I will sit down now, but the time will come when you will hear me.*"

With regard to this memorable prophecy, so brilliantly realized, it has been well remarked that—"To think this and say it next day would have been nothing. To say so, not so much in the petulance of temper as with the calm earnestness of conviction, at a moment when most men would have been crushed helplessly under the load of ridicule, and stung beyond power of reflec-

tion by the disappointment of cherished hopes, gave evidence of unexampled strength of will and presence of mind, and of the overweening self-confidence it went so far to justify."

On Canning resuming his seat, after having failed to impress the House in his maiden speech, he was advised by his friend, Mr. Pitt, to remain silent for some sessions until he had made himself perfectly familiar with the intellectual atmosphere of the House of Commons, so as to know, the next time he took part in debate, how to speak and what to avoid. Mr. Disraeli did not act upon this principle. During the next few years his name is to be met with in the pages of Hansard, not frequently but sufficiently often to show that he maintained consistently the political views he always held, and that he had now obtained the ear of his audience. Whilst speaking he was often encouraged by the approval of Sir Robert Peel, and on one occasion he succeeded in obtaining a loud "Hear, hear!" not uttered in irony, from his virulent enemy, O'Connell. Let us rake up from the past the opinions he expressed before the name of Disraeli was among the most prominent of the orators of his day. When Mr. Villiers made his annual motion on the corn laws (March 15, 1838), we find him contradicting the statement that the existence of the corn laws exposed English manufactures to unfair competition. As became a man of letters, he supported (April 25, 1838) Sergeant Talfourd's bill to amend the law of copyright, and urging the claims of authors upon the state to have their works protected. Upon the House resolving itself into committee on the Irish Municipal Corporations Bill (June 1, 1838), he protested against the tendency to centralization by which it was characterized, and on the bill collapsing, the government, later on in the session, brought in a new measure, which Mr. Disraeli denounced as "a most profligate one." He spoke, with much humour and liberality of sentiment, in favour of the

motion of Mr. Duncombe (Feb. 28, 1839) respecting theatrical entertainments in the city of Westminster during the season of Lent. It appears that it was the inconsistent and intolerant custom, whilst theatrical representations might take place in the other parts of the metropolis, to forbid them in Westminster during the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent. Mr. Duncombe very properly argued that if it were wrong to go to theatres on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, in the city of Westminster, it was equally wrong to watch theatrical performances on the same days during the same season in the other parts of London which were not under the jurisdiction of the city of Westminster. He complained of the pecuniary loss sustained by actors and actresses, and mildly inquired, if the Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent were so very sacred, why the bishops gave dinners, and went out to dinner, on those holy days?

Mr. Disraeli followed suit. He hoped, he said, that he entertained as profound a respect for the established religion of the country as any one on the episcopal bench; but when the House was met upon a question of this nature, it was necessary to indulge in a little research. He wished to know at what time during the Protestant sway in this country Lent had been rigidly and properly respected. He was not prepared to say that he approved of any relaxation of a rigid observance of Lent so far as Wednesdays and Fridays were concerned. He was not prepared to say that it might not be just, and expedient, and prudent, and religious, and proper to observe it even for forty days. But then they must give him forty days of Lent as they had ever been observed when they were perfectly observed—they must give him the forty days of Lent, with the "mysteries" and with the "moralities:" with those mysteries and with those moralities which were acted by the monks. This was the only mode in which humanity had tolerated the religious observance of Lent, and these were the amusements

to which the people then had recourse. Nor should we forget that the birth of Protestantism and of the drama in England were almost simultaneous. The moment Protestantism had sway in England there was a great relaxation in the observance of Lent—in fact, it had never been observed rigidly and completely in Protestant times. And besides, he must say, that the question of the observance of Lent on two days in the week, without an equal observance of good morals and manners in other respects, was but the shadow of a custom, and the shade of a faith. Holding these views, he would certainly vote for the motion.

A few days afterwards (March 8, 1839), the Irish Municipal Corporations Bill came again before the House. Mr. Disraeli opposed it, objecting, as he had before, to its centralization, and declaring that if its clauses became law the rights and liberties of Ireland could never be assured. It was on this occasion that O'Connell loudly cried approvingly "Hear, hear!" The young member for Maidstone spoke at greater length when he expressed his intention to vote against Mr. Hume's motion for household suffrage (March 21, 1839). He now, for the first time, treated the House to the views he had laid down in his "Vindication of the English Constitution." Mr. Hume, in the advocacy of his cause, had spoken much of "the people" who, of course, were strongly in favour of the measure, and he had also declared that taxation and representation ought to go hand in hand. Mr. Disraeli differed from the great economist. The constitution of England, he said, consisted of three estates of the realm, and the commons of England formed one of those estates. If the elective body in the country were to be an estate of the realm, it would be absurd to have a House of Commons to represent the volition of the nation. And pray, he asked, what was to be understood by "the people?" They knew what "a nation" was, but what was meant by "a people?" The phrase "people" was not a political phrase, but a term of natural history, a physiological term. The

House of Commons was the representative not of "the people," but of the commons of England. It had been said in the course of this debate that the theory of their constitution was that taxation and representation should go hand in hand. Where was that principle to be found? In what part of the constitution? In Magna Charta, in the Bill of Rights, or in the famous Reform Bill which was welcomed with so much enthusiasm, and was now attacked with so much causticity? The principle of representation did not necessarily include election, as there might be both representation without election and election without representation. The Church of England was represented in the House of Lords—there was representation without election, for the bishops were not elected by the clergy. The House of Lords was as much a representative body as the House of Commons, but that House was not elected. If taxation and representation went hand in hand, then indirect taxation gave as good a claim to representation as direct taxation. If direct taxation was a qualification for the exercise of the elective franchise, then why should not indirect taxation, and why should they stop at household suffrage? It had been said that the progress of education and general enlightenment would qualify the whole male population for the exercise of the elective franchise. But how did they not know, he asked the House, that the progress of this very enlightenment would inspire the population with a desire to reject the representative system altogether, and resort to the Prussian policy of government, by which there was no suffrage given at all, but every man was preferred in the state according to his merits? He could not support the motion.

He took the same course when the education question (June 20, 1839) came before the House. He made a distinction between "national education" and "state education:" the one he approved of, the other he was opposed to. He was not in favour of paternal government, which stamped out the

sense of independence in man, and caused him to rely upon others. Individual effort should be encouraged, but aid from the state discouraged. It was the longest speech he had as yet made in the House of Commons, and will bear being taken out of the oblivion of Hansard.

He objected, he said, that education should be carried on under the superintendence, the interference, and the control of the state. When he came to examine facts, he found that education did not owe much to the interference of the state. It appeared to him that the state had done little or nothing, and that nearly all that had been done had been effected by public aid and individual enterprise. The state in this country had not formed a single road, built a single bridge, or dug a single canal. Society should be strong, but the state weak. To diminish the duties of the citizen was to peril the rights of the subject. He ascribed to these principles the realization in this country of the two greatest blessings of social life—liberty and order. A despotic government might insure order; a republic might afford liberty; but the combination of liberty and of order—order not disturbed by national injustice, and liberty not disturbed by popular outrage—had been realized in England alone. The chief characteristics of the English people had long been known as independence, self-reliance, caution, and enterprise; and these they owed to their system of self-government. But it was now wished to return to that system of society which was an indication of a barbarous age, but which had gained for itself the epithet of "paternal." Wherever they found a paternal government they found a state education. Take China, take Persia, take Austria—the China of Europe—take Prussia—the equivalent of Persia—and there it would be seen that the most perfect systems of national education were to be found. Yet where everything was left to the government, the subject became a machine. He therefore opposed the system on account of its tendency to injure

their national character. He was an advocate for national education, but it did not follow that he should also be an advocate for state education—there was a great distinction between the two. Was it true that education had been so neglected as had been alleged? Had the cellar schools in their great manufacturing towns done nothing? Had the church done nothing? He regretted that so important a measure had been brought forward at the close of the session, and that the experience and patriotism of the House of Lords had not been consulted in the matter. He would vote against the bill. "I believe," he concluded, "the great object which every English statesman ought to have in view is—to encourage the habits of self-government amongst the people; and it is because I consider the proposition which has been submitted to our consideration as hostile to the acquisition of those habits that I oppose the scheme. I believe that it is an axiom in civil policy, that in exact proportion as we curtail the duties of citizens, we peril the rights of subjects; and I believe we have done that already to some extent. We have already had recourse to a system of central organization; and what has that system not produced? and what may it not yet produce? Let us remember that the same system which tyrannized in the nursery under the pretence of education, may again make its appearance, and immure old age within hated walls, under the specious plea of affording relief. It is always the state and never society—always machinery and never sympathy. By our system of state education all would be thrown into the same mint, and all would come out with the same impress and superscription. We may have a bloated mechanical prosperity; we may make money; we may make railroads; but when the age of passion comes, when those interests are in motion, and those feelings stirring, which will shake society to its centre—then we shall see what will become of the votaries of state education! We shall then see

whether the people have received the same sort of education which was advocated and supported so nobly by William of Wykeham: by him who built schools, and founded and endowed colleges. Who, I would ask, built our universities? Did they spring from a 'system of central organization?' Who built our colleges, churches, and cathedrals? Do we owe them to a scheme of 'centralization' propounded and supported by the state? No; other principles actuated the men of former days; and let us look abroad on Ireland, and witness the result. Where shall we find a country more elevated in the social scale? Where a people more distinguished for all that is excellent in the human character? The time will come, if you persist in your present course, when you will find that you have revolutionized the English character; and when that is effected, you can no longer expect English achievements."

These remarks are more original than sound, and we are glad to think that within recent years they have not been acted upon. We have adopted the system of state education without it having altered the English character, except for the better, and without it being calculated to endanger English achievements in the future. In spite of Mr. Disraeli's objections to centralization, the system was no novelty. Our universities established a central system of education. It was found expedient to centralize justice, why, then, should it have been pernicious to centralize education? Nor was the example of China a happy one in favour of Mr. Disraeli's arguments. Whatever evils the Chinese empire labours under, it certainly owes a deep debt of gratitude to its system of education; through it the democracy in the country has found a vent; and hence has preserved the empire from many of those convulsions which have distracted Europe. The speech of the member of Maidstone on this occasion is valuable, since it shows how keenly he appreciated the English character, and how stoutly he opposed any measure which, in his eyes, was calcu-

lated to destroy the manliness of the people he so much admired, and to lower the prestige of the country of his adoption. A modern bishop has said that he would sooner see his countrymen drunk than enslaved. Mr. Disraeli preferred to see Englishmen ignorant rather than lose the majesty of their self-reliance. Happily, we have arranged matters so that knowledge can be circulated without loss to the sense of independence in the individual or danger to the future of the community.

Events were now stirring which caused Mr. Disraeli to divert his attention for the moment from parliamentary to the wider field of national criticism. The years that succeeded the passing of the Reform Bill were years of increasing agricultural distress and commercial depression. The Englishman who, at the present day, studies the condition of the working classes—the hours of labour controlled by the state, the restrictions placed upon the employment of women and children, an ameliorated poor-law system, the development of education, the advantages derived from cheap travelling and cheap correspondence, the abolition of odious imposts and slave-driving barbarities, and the rest—cannot but at once perceive how superior is the position of the labouring man in every respect to that which was the lot of his predecessors. Beneath the sway of the Melbourne government nothing could be more piteous or revolting than the situation in which the lower orders found themselves. In the mines, young women half clad in coarse sacking, unsexed and diseased, worked like beasts chained to the cars they had to drag along from subterranean passage to passage until death relieved them from the miserable burden of their existence. Boys as soon as they could walk were employed in all kinds of labour, which stunted their growth and poisoned their manhood. The peasant received wages which, even with the aid of out-door relief, scarcely kept body and soul together; whilst the home in which he was lodged, damp and dilapidated, was

scarcely ever put in repair by his landlord. The hard, selfish Lord Marney in Mr. Disraeli's touching novel of "Sybil"—a work which contains the best description we have of the condition of the working classes at this time—was no exaggerated type of many a country landowner, and of the light in which the tenantry were regarded.

"We have nothing to complain of," said Lord Marney. "We continue reducing the rates, and as long as we do that the country must improve. The workhouse test tells. We had the other day a case of incendiarism, which frightened some people; but I inquired into it, and am quite satisfied it originated in purely accidental circumstances; at least nothing to do with wages. I ought to be a judge, for it was on my own property."

"And what is the rate of wages in your part of the world, Lord Marney?" inquired Mr. St. Lys, who was standing by.

"Oh! good enough: not like your manufacturing districts; but people who work in the open air instead of a furnace can't expect, and don't require such. They get their eight shillings a week; at least generally."

"Eight shillings a week!" said Mr. St. Lys. "Can a labouring man with a family, perhaps of eight children, live on eight shillings a week?"

"Oh! as for that," said Lord Marney, "they get more than that, because there is beer-money allowed, at least to a great extent among us, though I for one do not approve of the practice, and that makes nearly a shilling per week additional; and then some of them have potato grounds, though I am entirely opposed to that system."

"And yet," said Mr. St. Lys, "how they contrive to live is to me marvellous."

"Oh! as for that," said Lord Marney, "I have generally found the higher the wages the worse the workman. They only spend their money in the beer-shops. *They* are the curse of this country."

"But what is a poor man to do," said Mr. St. Lys, "after his day's work, if he returns to his own roof and finds no home; his fire extinguished, his food unprepared; the partner of his life, wearied with labour in the field or the factory, still absent, or perhaps in bed from exhaustion, or because she has returned wet to the skin, and has no change of raiment for her relief? We have removed woman from her sphere; we may have reduced wages by her introduction into the market of labour; but under these circumstances what we call domestic life is a condition impossible to be realized for the people of this country; and we must not therefore

be surprised that they seek solace or rather refuge in the beer-shop.'

Lord Marney looked up at Mr. St. Lys with a stare of high-bred impertinence, and then carelessly observed, without directing his words to him, 'They may say what they like, but it is all an affair of population.'

'I would rather believe that it is an affair of resources,' said Mr. St. Lys; 'not what is the amount of our population, but what is the amount of our resources for their maintenance.'

'It comes to the same thing,' said Lord Marney. 'Nothing can put this country right but emigration on a great scale; and as the government do not choose to undertake it, I have commenced it for my own defence on a small scale. I will take care that the population of my parishes is not increased. I build no cottages, and I destroy all I can; and I am not ashamed or afraid to say so.'

Landlords of the Marney class, acting upon this principle, forced the people they expelled from their cottages to flock to the neighbouring towns for shelter. Here, in the miserable tenements they were obliged to occupy, their condition was even worse than in the rickety hovels in the fields from which they had been driven. We quote again from the author of "Sybil":—

"These wretched tenements seldom consisted of more than two rooms, in one of which the whole family, however numerous, were obliged to sleep, without distinction of age, or sex, or suffering. With the water streaming down the walls, the light distinguished through the roof, with no hearth even in winter, the virtuous mother in the sacred pangs of childbirth gives forth another victim to our thoughtless civilization; surrounded by three generations whose inevitable presence is more painful than her sufferings in that hour of travail; while the father of her coming child, in another corner of the sordid chamber, lies stricken by that typhus which his contaminating dwelling has breathed into his veins, and for whose next prey is perhaps destined his new-born child. These swarming walls had neither windows nor doors sufficient to keep out the weather, or admit the sun, or supply the means of ventilation; the humid and putrid roof of thatch exhaling malaria like all other decaying vegetable matter. The dwelling-rooms were neither boarded nor paved; and whether it were that some were situate in low and damp places, occasionally flooded by the river, and usually much below the level of the road; or that the springs, as was often the case, would burst through the mud floor; the ground was at no time better than so much clay, while sometimes

you might see little channels cut from the centre under the doorways to carry off the water, the door itself removed from its hinges; a resting-place for infancy in its deluged home. These hovels were in many instances not provided with the commonest conveniences of the rudest police; contiguous to every door might be observed the dung-heap on which every kind of filth was accumulated, for the purpose of being disposed of for manure, so that, when the poor man opened his narrow habitation in the hope of refreshing it with the breeze of summer, he was met with a mixture of gases from reeking dunghills."

Nor was the operative a whit better off or better cared for than the peasant. He was seldom paid more than a penny an hour, and of this wretched sum he had at the end of the work to accept a portion of it in kind. The truck system was in full force, and the employer, who was often the owner of the stores at which the working man had to deal, not only paid his victim in victuals and groceries, but made him purchase those necessities of life at an exorbitant rate. "This here age," says Master Nixon in "Sybil," "wants a great deal, but what it principally wants is to have its wages paid in the current coin of the realm;" and he expressed the sentiments of his class. Slowly but gradually this state of things rose from murmuring and discontent into open sedition. The poor man saw the capitalist rolling in wealth, whilst he, the labourer, was doomed to a life of the heaviest toil and bitterest misery. He made war upon his employer. If he was a peasant, he burnt his landlord's ricks; if he was a mechanic, he smashed the machinery. He paid heed to the evil counsels of the agitator who went stumping the country, setting class against class, and sowing broadcast the seeds of sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion. The English people were then, as Mr. Disraeli said, divided into two nations. "Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are

formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws—the rich and the poor.”

But it was against the operation of the new poor laws that the hostility of the lower classes was especially directed. By the suppression of the monasteries the chief support of vagrant mendicity was withdrawn; and ever since that date statute after statute had been passed with the object of dealing with the vexed question of pauper relief, and settling it upon some merciful yet repressive basis. The various acts—the acts of Elizabeth, of Charles the Second, of George the First, Davies Gilbert's Act, the Select Vestry Act, and others—had, however, failed in effectually checking imposture, or in relieving real distress. “The industrial population of the whole country,” writes Sir Erskine May, “was being rapidly reduced to pauperism, while property was threatened with no distant ruin. The system which was working this mischief assumed to be founded upon benevolence; but no evil genius could have designed a scheme of greater malignity for the corruption of the human race. The fund intended for the relief of want and sickness—of age and impotence—was recklessly distributed to all who begged a share. Everyone was taught to look to the parish, and not to his own honest industry, for support. The idle clown, without work, fared as well as the industrious labourer who toiled from morn till night. The shameless slut, with half a dozen children, the progeny of many fathers, was provided for as liberally as the destitute widow and her orphans. But worse than this, independent labourers were tempted and seduced into the degraded ranks of pauperism, by payments freely made in aid of wages. Cottage rents were paid, and allowances given according to the number of a family. Hence thrift, self-denial, and honest independence were discouraged. The manly farm labourer, who scorned to ask for alms, found his own wages artificially lowered, while improvi-

dence was cherished and rewarded by the parish. He could barely live, without incumbrance; but boys and girls were hastening to church, without a thought of the morrow; and rearing new broods of paupers, to be maintained by the overseer. Who can wonder that labourers were rapidly sinking into pauperism, without pride or self-respect? But the evil did not even rest here. Paupers were actually driving other labourers out of employment—the labour being preferred which was partly paid out of rates, to which employers were forced to contribute. As the cost of pauperism, thus encouraged, was increasing, the poorer rate-payers were themselves reduced to poverty. The soil was ill-cultivated by pauper labour, and its rental consumed by parish rates. In a period of fifty years the poor-rates were quadrupled, and had reached, in 1833, the enormous amount of £8,600,000. In many parishes they were approaching the annual value of the land itself.”

Government at last resolved to inquire into the matter, and accordingly in the year 1834, on the recommendation of a royal commission, appointed at the request of parliament to examine into the administration of the laws relating to the poor, the important Poor Law Amendment Act was passed. The essence of this measure was contained in two leading provisions. The first of these placed the superintendence of the whole machinery for dispensing relief to the poor in the hands of a central body of three commissioners, whilst the second contemplated the combination of a number of parishes into a so-called union, which henceforward became the unit of area of poor-law management. The great objects of the measure were those upon which the act of Elizabeth, to limit relief to destitution, and to distinguish between want and imposture, had been based. To arrive at these conclusions, the test was to be found in the workhouse. Under the old system pauperism had been generally relieved at home—the parish workhouse being only looked upon as the asylum for

the aged, for orphans, and for those whom it suited better than out-door relief. However, now out-door relief was withdrawn altogether from the able-bodied paupers, whose wants were to be tested by their willingness to enter the parish workhouse. As soon as the harshness of these proceedings began to be practically felt, a fierce outcry against the act was raised by the lower orders. The poor man, reduced by sickness or misfortune to demand help from the parish to tide him over temporary distress, pleaded in vain for the out-door relief which kept his home together and mitigated his sufferings. If he were to become the recipient of parochial assistance, a crushing future stood before him. He had to break up his humble establishment, to part with his household goods, to enter a prison-like asylum called the workhouse, to be cruelly separated from his wife and children, to wear a hideous dress, to be subject to severe restrictions upon his personal liberty, to do hard work, to be half fed, and, sad and wearied, to lie down to rest and breathe a tainted atmosphere in a crowded cell. We cannot be surprised that the labouring man, reduced to poverty from no fault of his own, with the instincts of affection in his nature, and not wholly lost to the sense of self-respect, should have declined to seek the shelter offered him on such terrible terms. Rather than be separated from those he loved, and be treated as a convict in order to obtain bare sustenance, he preferred to perish from want. He refused to "enter the House;" and death from starvation was often the consequence of his refusal.

When misery has marked the lower orders for its own, the professional agitator generally appears upon the scene to attack the existing government and show how grievances can be redressed. A few weeks after the coronation of the young queen a great Radical meeting was held in Birmingham, and Chartism sprang into life and made its mischievous influence felt. The country was in a sore plight; trade was

bad, the farming interest was crushed by a succession of bad harvests, the poor were under-paid and over-worked. All these evils, it was now suggested, were owing to the working classes not being properly represented in the legislature. The recent Reform Bill had abolished various nomination-boroughs; had conferred the right of returning members on several large and prosperous towns; had introduced a ten-pound household qualification for boroughs, and had extended the county franchise to leaseholders and copy-holders; but had done nothing for the working classes. It admitted the middle class to the representation, but it declined to go any lower in the social scale. Since the working men had been mainly instrumental in creating the agitation which caused the Reform Bill to be carried, their exclusion from the benefit of its clauses excited considerable indignation and discontent. The people banded themselves together and gave public expression to their feelings. They drew up a programme of their wants, and showed it to O'Connell. He approved of it. "There's your charter," he said; "agitate for it, and never be content with anything less." The title given was a good one, and henceforth the programme of the lower classes was called the "People's Charter," and those who advocated its contents went by the name of Chartists. It cannot be said that the demands were very exorbitant. The masses asked for universal suffrage, for annual parliaments, for vote by ballot, for the abolition of the property qualification then required for election of a member to Parliament, for the payment of members, and for the division of the country into equal electoral districts. These were the famous "six points" so familiar to all who have studied the agitation of this time. The Chartists used all their efforts to carry out their programme. They started newspapers of their own to advance their cause; they petitioned parliament; they broke out into open revolt; they held seditious meetings; they encouraged strikes: and on one memorable

occasion their leaders were tried for high treason. For ten years the agitation continued, and then it died a natural death.

Mr. Disraeli had always, from the very beginning of his parliamentary career to the day when he breathed his last in Curzon Street, taken a keen interest in the welfare of the working classes. He held that between the aristocracy and the lower orders there was far more of sympathy than between either the aristocracy and the middle classes, or the middle classes and the working men; and it was one of the great objects of the political creed he professed, to heighten and strengthen this sympathy. Whenever an opportunity occurred, no matter how his conduct affected party interests, his vote was ever registered in favour of the comfort and prosperity of the people. Like Lord Palmerston in his later years, he wanted the working classes to enjoy themselves; and every measure which tended in a judicious and legitimate manner to further such enjoyment he strenuously advocated, both when he was an unknown member of parliament as when he was a responsible minister of state. He went into the lobby against Sir Robert Peel on the question of the Notting Hill Footway Bill, asserting that wherever private privilege, however ancient, stood between the toiling multitudes and the boon of fresh air and harmless recreation, private privilege ought to yield gracefully its exclusive rights. He was not in favour of making the observance of the Sabbath so strict and Puritan-like as to militate against the innocent pleasures and amusements of the people, who work arduously six days out of every seven. He was always an advocate of a sound sanitary system to be adopted in the dwellings of the poor. Whilst the professed champions of the working classes—Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright—held aloof from the philanthropic efforts of Lord Ashley, now Lord Shaftesbury, to limit the hours of labour in factories, and to protect women and children from over-work in mines, it was Mr. Disraeli who was one of the steadiest of

that kind-hearted peer's supporters. Influenced by these generous sympathies, when Mr. Attwood, the member for Birmingham, came forward in the House of Commons to present the national petition of the Chartists, Mr. Disraeli was not ashamed to express himself in kindly terms of the objects those misguided men had in view. Lord John Russell, in his most acidulated manner, had sneered at the charter and its advocates, whereupon Mr. Disraeli rose up to reply. He, too, disappointed, he said, of the charter as a remedy for the grievances complained of, but he candidly admitted that his sympathies were not wholly withheld from the petitioners. The complaints they brought forward were not groundless; recent legislation had been against them and their order; and sooner or later the working classes would have to be admitted to a larger share in the management of the affairs of the country than they then possessed. Those who, criticising the Reform Bill of 1867, accuse Mr. Disraeli of inconsistency, will do well to ponder upon this extract from the speech he delivered on the occasion of the Chartist petition in the summer of 1839:—

"If the noble lord," (Lord John Russell), he said, "supposed that, in this country, he could establish a permanent government in what was styled now-a-days a monarchy of the middle classes, he would be indulging a great delusion, which, if persisted in, must shake our institutions and endanger the throne. He believed such a system was actually foreign to the character of the people of England. He believed that in this country the exercise of political power must be associated with great public duties. That was the true principle to adhere to. In proportion as they departed from it they were wrong; as they kept by it they would approximate to that lofty state of things which had been described as so desirable by the honourable member for Birmingham. The noble lord had answered the honourable member for Birmingham, but he had not answered the Chartists. The honour-

able member for Birmingham had made a very dexterous speech, a skilful evolution, in favour of the middle classes; but although he had attempted to dovetail the charter on the Birmingham union, all that had recently taken place on the appearance of the Chartists before the leaders of the union—newly-created magistrates—and the speeches by members of the convention within the last few days—led to a different conclusion—they manifested the greatest hostility to the middle classes. They (the working men) made no attack on the aristocracy, none on the corn laws—but upon the newly enfranchised constituency, not on the old—upon that peculiar constituency which was the basis of the noble lord's government."

However, the reign of the Melbourne government was rapidly drawing to a close. The blunders it had committed and the grievances that clamoured for redress were fast undermining whatever of stability it had possessed. The Jamaica question gave it the finishing blow. Owing to quarrels in the island, Lord Melbourne had resolved on proposing to parliament a suspension of the constitution of Jamaica for five years, during which period the affairs of the colony were to be administered by a provisional government. The proposal was opposed not only by Sir Robert Peel and his followers, but by numerous Radicals, as a violation of Liberal principles. The ministry carried the second reading of their bill by five votes. Such a victory was virtually a defeat, and Lord Melbourne resigned. We know what followed. Sir Robert was sent for, but declined to form an administration on the refusal of the queen to part with certain Whig ladies, 'the friends of her youth,' who held posts in the household. The "Bedchamber Plot," as it was called, restored Lord Melbourne to power, and once more he was

"To make believe to guide the realm
Without a hand upon the helm."

In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli, Sir Robert Peel was wrong in not taking office in 1839. "His withdrawal," he writes, "seems to have

been a mistake. In the great heat of parliamentary faction which had prevailed since 1831, the royal prerogative which, unfortunately for the rights and liberties and social welfare of the people, had since 1688 been more or less oppressed, had waned fainter and fainter. A youthful princess on the throne, whose appearance touched the imagination, and to whom her people were generally inclined to ascribe something of that decision of character which becomes those born to command, offered a favourable opportunity to restore the exercise of that regal authority, the usurpation of whose functions has entailed on the people of England so much suffering and so much degradation. It was unfortunate that one who, if any, should have occupied the proud and national position of the leader of the Tory party, the chief of the people, and the champion of the throne, should have commenced his career as minister under Victoria by an unseemly contrariety to the personal wishes of the queen. The reaction of public opinion, disgusted with years of parliamentary tumult and the incoherence of party legislation; the balanced state in the kingdom of political parties themselves; the personal character of the sovereign—these were all causes which intimated that a movement in favour of prerogative was at hand. The leader of the Tory party should have vindicated his natural position, and availed himself of the gracious occasion; he missed it; and, as the occasion was inevitable, the Whigs enjoyed its occurrence. And thus England witnessed for the first time the portentous anomaly of the oligarchical or Venetian party, which had in the old days destroyed the free monarchy of England, retaining power merely by favour of the court."

During the ensuing few months that Lord Melbourne's government was in office, the member for Maidstone was not silent. The pages of Hansard show us that he was often on his legs putting questions, supporting or opposing measures, and criticising in no toothless fashion the deeds of the Whigs

and the tenacity with which they clung to power. He sneered at the administration for claiming to be considered the government of the middle party, since it declared that it avoided all extremes. He disliked middle parties, for they reminded him, he said, of the lawyers who eat the oysters and gave the shells to their clients. He opposed Lord John Russell's motion for the establishment of district and county constabulary, objecting to the inquisitorial powers with which the new police would be furnished. He took the part of two men who were imprisoned for political offences, but whose confinement was carried out under exceptional circumstances of indignity and barbarity. He spoke against the agitation for the repeal of the corn laws, and he directed attention to the miserable state of the country generally. But his chief speech, during this period of ministerial incapacity, was in support of the motion of Sir Robert Peel. The ex-premier gave notice that, on May 31, he should move "That Her Majesty's ministers do not sufficiently possess the confidence of the House of Commons to enable them to carry through the House measures which they deem of essential importance to the public welfare, and that their continuance in office under such circumstances is at variance with the spirit of the constitution."

With this sentiment Mr. Disraeli cordially agreed. He began by passing a high eulogium upon the character of Sir Robert Peel. "Placed," he said, "in an age of rapid civilization and rapid transition, he has adapted the practical character of his measures to the condition of the times. When in power, he has never proposed a change which he did not carry; and when in opposition, he never forgot that he was at the head of the Conservative party. He has never employed his influence for factious purposes, and has never been stimulated in his exertions by a disordered desire of obtaining office; above all, he has never carried himself to the opposite benches by making propositions by which

he was not ready to abide. Whether in or out of office, the right hon. baronet has done his best to make the settlement of the new constitution of England work for the benefit of the present time and of posterity." He then showed how necessary it was that there should be a clear understanding between the representative and executive bodies. What, he asked, was the duty of a government placed in the situation of the present servants of the crown, unsupported as they were by a House of Commons elected under their own auspices? They had frequently been defeated in the House of Lords, and of late they had been frequently defeated in the House of Commons. Clearly it was their duty to bow before the feeling of the country, and resign. Their conduct was as mean as it was unconstitutional. "The reformed House of Commons," he said, "proud of its new-fangled existence, and believing that all power would centre in itself, permitted a minister of state to stigmatize a vote of the House of Lords as 'the whisper of a faction.' But now the poisoned chalice is returned to their own lips. Those who have treated the House of Lords with insult are now treating the House of Commons with contempt. The fact is, that the government is too full of that specious Liberalism which they find it convenient periodically to assume; but in attacking aristocratic institutions, it has become the victim of a haughty and rapacious oligarchy. The present is not the first time the Whigs have been placed in this situation, and in the present day they have been obliged to reconstruct the House of Commons, and to conciliate the House of Lords. In one thing they have been consistent—in a systematic slight of our parliamentary institutions. They now govern the country, not only in spite of the House of Lords, but in spite of the House of Commons. What will be the consequence? Is it possible that these 'apostles of liberty,' as they have been termed, should be found cringing in the antechambers of the palace, and that they now intend to support them-

selves in office by clandestine and backstairs' influence? The career of Her Majesty's present servants has been a singular one; they began by remodelling the House of Commons and insulting the House of Lords; then they assaulted the church; next the colonial constitutions; afterwards they assailed the municipalities of the kingdom, attacked the rich and the poor, and now, in their last moments, at one fell swoop, make war upon the colonial, commercial, and agricultural interests. Under these circumstances, I see no reason why the party to which I belong should despair, and the right hon. baronet (Sir Robert Peel), who, according to the president of the Board of Control,* is not a great man, and cannot be a great minister, may have the opportunity of establishing a government which will have the confidence of the education, the property, and, I sincerely believe, the enlightened feeling of the great body of the nation. In that case the prophecy of the right hon. gentleman will be falsified." The motion of Sir Robert Peel was carried by a majority of *one*, the ayes being 312 and the noes 311. Instead of resigning, the government preferred to appeal to the country. Parliament was dissolved, and soon every shire was busy with the confusion and party hate of a general election.

We must now allude to an event which, strictly speaking, has no place in a political biography, yet, since it influenced in no slight manner the career of Mr. Disraeli, should not be omitted. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the senior member for Maidstone, had died early in 1839, and in the autumn of the following year Mr. Disraeli married the widow of his late colleague. The lady was possessed of an ample fortune, and the union was so singularly happy as to make it remarkable even in this country, which has given a word to our language incapable of translation into a foreign tongue—the word *Home*. Nothing, we are told—and it

is no intrusion into the privacy of domesticity, for the fact was never a secret—was more charming or more complete than the devotion to each other, and the sympathy with each other, which existed between Mr. and Mrs. Disraeli. To his wife—to her advice as well as to her wealth—the late Lord Beaconsfield owed much, and he never scrupled openly to admit his acknowledgments. There are men, distinguished in the various worlds of politics, literature, art, science, and commerce, who, when they have attained to fame, quietly keep their wives in the background, and enjoy the hospitalities of the great and listen to the flatteries of society, unencumbered by the presence of their partners, who have patiently borne the toil and burden of obscurity, yet are not permitted to bathe in the sunshine of prosperity. Mr. Disraeli did not belong to this class. Where he went his wife went, and no purely social invitation was ever accepted which did not include her who was, in the most exhaustive sense of the word, his helpmeet. That the late leader of the Conservative party, both as Mr. Disraeli and as the Earl of Beaconsfield, was eminently a popular personage in society, is well known; his geniality, his wit, his tact, his homage to the presence and influence of woman, and above all the charms of his conversation, could not fail to render him an acquisition even to the most exclusive coteries; yet he owed not a little of his social popularity to the sweetness and purity of his home-life. Nor was he in this respect acting foreign to the instincts of the race whose blood coursed in his veins. Whatever faults the Jews possess, conjugal infidelity and a distaste for the repose and enjoyments of home are not amongst them; their religious ceremonies are so mixed up with the seclusion of family life—the home being, as it were, the completion of the synagogue—that they are of all people the most noted for the strength and purity of the domestic virtues. That these were apparent in Mr. Disraeli is plain to all who have studied

* Sir John Cam Hobhouse, then president of the Board of Control.

his career, or know anything of his life. On the publication of his pathetic novel, "Sybil," he dedicated the book to his wife in these terms:—"I would inscribe this work," he wrote, "to one whose noble spirit and gentle nature ever prompt her to sympathize with the suffering; to one whose sweet voice has often encouraged, and whose taste and judgment have ever guided, its pages; the most severe of critics, but—a perfect wife!"

On the resignation of his cabinet, in 1868, he sought no honours for himself; but he paid a graceful tribute to the woman he loved, by having her raised to the peerage as Viscountess Beaconsfield. In the debate on the address to Her Majesty, that a monument should be erected in Westminster Abbey to the memory of Lord Beaconsfield, allusion was made, in both houses of parliament, to the grace and devotion of the deceased statesman's married life. "He had," said Lord Malmesbury, who knew the ex-premier intimately—"He had every domestic virtue which a man need have. It was fortunate for him, as he always said, that he was supported by a most amiable and devoted wife, to whom he was himself equally devoted. I remember when at last he was deprived of the support of his wife, he said to me, with tears in his eyes, 'I hope some of my friends will take notice of me now in my great misfortune, for I have no home; and when I tell my coachman to drive home, I feel it is a mockery.' I recollect a remarkable story, of which perhaps your lordships have heard, and which was told me by himself. One day he arrived at the House of Commons, having an important speech to make, when the servant, in closing the carriage-door, shut in Lady Beaconsfield's fingers. She had the courage not to cry out, not to say a word, and not to move till he was out of sight, lest she should disturb his mind and influence the speech he was going to make."

Mr. Gladstone, in the generous yet guarded speech he made on the occasion of

the proposed monument, thus expressed himself upon the somewhat unusual subject of the domestic virtues of a political opponent:—"There was a feeling, sir," he said, addressing the chairman of the committee, "lying nearer yet to the very centre of his existence, which, though a domestic feeling, may yet without indelicacy be now referred to—his profound, devoted, tender, grateful affection for his wife—which if, as may be the case, has deprived him—I know not whether it be so or not—of the honours of public obsequies, has nevertheless left for him a more permanent title as one who knew, even amidst the storms and temptations of political life, what was due to the sanctity and the strength of domestic affection, and who made himself an example in that respect to the country in which he lived."

On the dissolution of parliament, Mr. Disraeli did not again seek the suffrages of the constituency of Maidstone. Whatever were his reasons—whether he was offended at the accusation, no sooner made than withdrawn, that he owed certain debts in the place; or that his wife, who warmly supported his canvass, did not care to exert herself in the town for which her first husband had been the senior representative; or that he did not wish to oppose the local resident that was brought forward, or whatever was the cause—Mr. Disraeli did not pay his expected visit to Kent. He was asked to stand for Wycombe, but declined. An invitation from Shrewsbury, numerous signed, was, however, accepted, and the future protectionist leader hurried into Shropshire. He was hotly opposed, and his enemies strained every nerve to defeat him; they declared that he was a turncoat, and, when he had satisfactorily vindicated himself from the charge, they vowed that he was over head and ears in debt; when that accusation was also clearly disproved, they resorted to other misstatements; and, when these had been fairly met and contradicted, they could always fall back upon the fact that he

was "a Jew," which, of course, could not be refuted, and which was an arrow always serviceable when the quiver of the spiteful was empty. Falsehood and malice, however, failed to win the day. Mr. Disraeli attacked the new poor law, sneered at the ten-pound householder of the vaunted Reform Bill, exposed the scandalous expenditure of the Whig government, and opposed the abolition of the corn laws by

the telling announcement that cheap bread was the thin edge of the wedge for the establishment of cheap labour. His views were supported by the majority of his hearers. In conjunction with Colonel Tomline, he was returned member for Shrewsbury. The numbers were—for the Tories, Tomline, 793; Disraeli, 787; for the Liberals, Parry, 604; Temple, 579. The Tory party had gained an easy victory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AGRICULTURAL INTEREST.

SIR ROBERT PEEL is the solitary instance on our roll of premiers of a man entirely destitute of the higher qualities of statesmanship—the creative faculty and the prescience which anticipates the course of events—who yet takes rank as a wise and great minister. Only those who confound memory with imagination can accuse him of originality of design where his political creed was concerned. Every one of the great measures with which his name is connected was the result of the labours of his predecessors; of every one of those measures he was at one time the chief opponent; yet every one of those measures was indebted to him, and not to its original author, for its enrolment upon the statute-book. Mr. Horner advocated the resumption of cash payments by the Bank; Mr. Peel opposed the motion; then he became converted to the idea; and it was through him, and not through Mr. Horner, that the currency bill became law. Mr. Canning passed his life in struggling with the legislature for the removal of Catholic disabilities. Mr. Peel was one of the most prominent opponents of the measure; yet it was through him, and not through Mr. Canning, that the Emancipation Act was carried. Mr. Cobden was the consistent advocate of the repeal of the corn laws; Sir Robert Peel was the chief of the great party which was most hostile to the efforts of the Manchester school; yet it was not Mr. Cobden, but Sir Robert Peel, who removed restrictions upon the importation of grain. He was the tenacious recipient of other men's ideas, which he elaborated, which he polished, which he methodized; but which, in spite of the finish with which they were presented for the approval of the House of

Commons, were no less the adapted schemes of others—and, curiously enough, of the very men whom at one time he had opposed.

The bitter taunts of Mr. Disraeli were, therefore, not without justification, when we consider the measures which Sir Robert Peel first denounced and afterwards advocated. It might be one-sided, but it certainly was not wholly untrue, to accuse him, as Mr. Disraeli accused him, of "trading on the ideas and intelligence of others;" of being "a burglar of other men's intellect;" and of permitting his life to develop into "one great appropriation clause." Yet, in spite of his lack of originality, Sir Robert Peel was a great minister. Never since the days of Sir Robert Walpole had there appeared a man who knew better how to excite parliamentary sympathies, how to appeal to parliamentary support, how to humour parliamentary antagonism, how to marshal parliamentary combinations and lead them on to victory. "He played upon the House of Commons," said Mr. Disraeli, "as if it were an old fiddle." Like the famous Lord Shaftesbury, one of the secrets of his strength lay in his thorough knowledge of the aims and wishes of the English people. He saw what the country wanted and obeyed its instructions. He did not stem the tide, but was carried along by the stream. He never led the nation, for it was the nation which led him; but he followed so cleverly, that to many he appeared to guide its destinies.

Another element of his power was the confidence which the middle classes reposed in him. We have had aristocratic premiers, and we now have a Radical premier, but Sir Robert Peel was essentially

a middle-class minister. He had none of that brilliancy of talent—the characteristic of a Canning or a Disraeli—which in the eyes of the middle classes is deemed so dangerous. Except in the House of Commons, he was dull, tedious, and shy, which to his admirers were only so many more proofs of his soundness and solidity of character. He had in an eminent degree those practical habits in business and that love for detail, without which no politician, in the opinion of the middle classes, can become a statesman. He had no vices; his life was pure and unsullied; and though a high tone of morality is appreciated by all whose good word is worth obtaining, by none is it more highly valued than by the middle classes. The aristocracy might laugh at him and say he had “no manners;” the Protectionists might brand him as an impostor and an apostate; but the middle classes trusted him and felt that their interests were in safe keeping. The Duke of Wellington failed to inspire them with confidence, but “they believed in Peel.”

Their belief was soon to be put to the test. On the assembling of parliament, the elections had gone strongly in favour of the Tory party, and it was evident to all that the fate of the Melbourne government was sealed. Defeated on an amendment to the address, the Whig premier placed his resignation in the hands of the queen, and he was succeeded in office by Sir Robert Peel. A Tory cabinet was soon formed. Lord Lyndhurst was the chancellor; Lord Wharncliffe, president of the council; Lord Haddington, first lord of the admiralty; the Duke of Buckingham, lord privy seal; Sir James Graham, home secretary; the Earl of Aberdeen, foreign secretary; Lord Stanley, colonial secretary; Lord Ellenborough, president of the board of control; Sir Henry Hardinge, secretary at war; the Earl of Ripon, president of the board of trade; Mr. Goulburn, chancellor of the exchequer; Sir G. Knatchbull, postmaster-general; and Lord Eliot, chief secretary for Ireland. The Duke of Wellington was

a member of the cabinet, but without office. Among those not in the cabinet were Lord Lowther, postmaster-general; Lord Granville Somerset, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; and Mr. W. E. Gladstone, vice-president of the board of trade.

Mr. Disraeli was not offered office. He had served his party loyally for five years; he was rising in the estimation of the House of Commons; apart from his marriage he was not a rich man, and there is little doubt but that, had he been asked to fill some subordinate post in the government—that of an under-secretary or of a vice-president—the compliment would have been gladly accepted. No such proposal was, however, made, and because he was ignored it afterwards pleased the peculiar malice of his enemies to assert that his opposition to Sir Robert Peel was due to his having been excluded from the ministry on this occasion. It was said that he had intrigued for office, and had received a rebuff; hence his hostility to the measures of the government, hence his personal animosity to the prime minister. Mr. Disraeli met these charges with his usual courage, and with a complete denial as to their truth. In the debate on the Corn Importation Bill (May 15, 1846), he stated before his false accusers that had he been an applicant for office, on the formation of the government of Sir Robert Peel, there would have been nothing dishonourable in the fact. He was a Conservative, he had supported his party, he was then a young man and he had never pretended to be without ambition. “But I can assure the House,” he solemnly said, “nothing of the kind ever occurred. I never shall—it is totally foreign to my nature—make an application for any place. Anything more unfounded than the rumour circulated to-night, that my opposition to the right honourable gentleman has ever been influenced by my being disappointed of office, there cannot be.” Lord Palmerston, shortly after Sir Robert Peel had come into power, once twitted Mr. Disraeli with this false charge. It was on the debate to unite the

diplomatic and consular services, an amalgamation which the member for Shrewsbury had advocated. "The hon. gentleman," said Lord Palmerston, "had indeed affirmed the general principle, that political adherents ought to be rewarded by appointments, and he regretted to observe an exception to that rule in the person of the hon. member himself. After the proof, however, of talent and ability which the hon. gentleman had afforded, although, perhaps, not of great industry in getting up the details of his case, he trusted, that before the end of the session, the government would overlook the slight want of industry for the sake of the talent, and that the House would see the maxim of the hon. member practically applied to his own case."

It was never a very safe proceeding to make an attack upon Mr. Disraeli, for he had the faculty of turning upon his assailant and giving as a rule far more bitter measure than he received. Lord Palmerston, who had served as secretary at war under Perceval, under Liverpool, under Canning, under Goderich, under Wellington, and as foreign minister under Grey and Melbourne, certainly laid himself open to retort so far as adherence to office was concerned, and Mr. Disraeli did not spare him. He must offer, he said, his acknowledgments to the noble viscount for his courteous aspirations for his political promotion. Such aspirations from such a quarter must be looked upon as suspicious. The noble viscount was a consummate master of the subject; and if the noble viscount would only impart to him the secret by which he had himself contrived to retain office during seven successive administrations, the present debate would certainly not be without a result.

Nor is it true that Mr. Disraeli, after having been returned for Shrewsbury, and during the period preceding the repeal of the corn laws, acted in a hostile manner towards the measures advocated by the government. We have only to refer to the pages of what Mr. Disraeli called

the "Dunciad of Politics," Hansard, to maintain this assertion. There we find the future protectionist leader playing the part of an independent, but by no means of a malevolent critic, upon the policy of the cabinet. He was a party man; but he was no blind, submissive partisan who votes as he is ordered, even when he disapproves of the schemes introduced. Still less did he permit any personal feelings he might entertain against the chief of the government to colour with their bias the views he held respecting public affairs. Early in the year 1842, when Sir Robert Peel introduced his scheme for modifying the corn laws, the member for Shrewsbury voted with the majority. His name is also to be found among the opponents of the annual motion of Mr. Villiers for the total repeal of the corn laws. Often when he felt himself unable to support the government, rather than do damage by an opposition which might be considered factious, Mr. Disraeli stood aloof altogether from the division. He neither voted for nor against the imposition of the income tax, which, as we shall subsequently see, he strongly disapproved of. He acted in the same manner towards those measures which resulted in the disruption of the Church of Scotland. His sympathy with the working-classes caused him not to look with disfavour upon the promoters of the second National Petition, yet he declined to harass the government, and purposely absented himself from the House. This course he pursued throughout the early years of the Peel administration so far as he consistently could; but when it came to a question of what he considered principle, he allowed no party restrictions to stand in the way of his vote. He spoke in favour, as we have said, of a combination of the consular and diplomatic services, and was opposed by Peel. He proposed, and was thwarted by the premier, that a committee should inquire into the late invasion of Afghanistan, since it appeared to him, he said, "that no better reason existed for that invasion than could

be offered by France, if she should choose to cross the Rhine, because she entertained some vague idea that all Europe was coalescing against her." He resisted the proposal to disfranchise Sudbury, and went into the lobby with the minority. He was an advocate for commercial treaties, as opposed to the unconditional repeal of import duties, and boldly delivered his opinions without any fencing or scheming reservations. On the Irish question he spoke with equal force and lucidity, but at greater length; the speech he made on that occasion is too masterly to be briefly dismissed.

The condition of Ireland was becoming more and more alarming. The agitation excited by O'Connell for the repeal of the union had now spread almost throughout the entire country. Monster meetings were held, at which an infuriated mob assembled, ready to wreak their vengeance upon all who should oppose their resolve to sever themselves from hated England. The usual concomitants of Irish revolt attended upon these proceedings. Landlords were unable to obtain their rents; the cattle of submissive tenants were houghed; all who refused to sympathize with the agitation were marked out for punishment, were unable to obtain the necessities of life, were often "carded," and occasionally shot. If the miserable people of a miserable island were to be kept in subjection, and if their country was not to pass into the hands of the enemy, it was evident that the English government must now actively bestir itself. It was no longer the revolt of a section, but the rebellion of a nation. Such was the situation of affairs when Lord John Russell moved to inquire into the state of Ireland. An important debate ensued, and on the fourth night (February 16, 1844) Mr. Disraeli rose up to address the House of Commons. He was listened to with great attention, for he spoke words which put the case clearly before his audience, and merited all the consideration they deserved. It had been stated, he be-

gan, that the grievances of Ireland had existed ever since the introduction of the reformed religion into that country. He denied that there was any necessary and irresistible connection between the introduction of Protestant principles into the island and the misgovernment they now deplored. Take, he said, the period preceding the breaking out of the civil war. "At that period there was a parliament in Dublin called by a Protestant king, presided over by a Protestant viceroy, and at that moment there was a Protestant established church in Ireland; yet the majority of the members of that parliament were Roman Catholics. The government was at that time carried on by a council of state, presided over by a Protestant deputy, yet many of the members of that council were Roman Catholics. The municipalities were then full of Roman Catholics. Several of the sheriffs also were Roman Catholics, and a very considerable number of magistrates were Roman Catholics. It is, therefore, very evident that it is not the necessary consequence of English connection—of a Protestant monarchy, or even of a Protestant church—that this embittered feeling at present exists; nor that that system of exclusion, which either in form or spirit has so long existed, is the consequence of Protestantism."

Then what was this much talked-of Irish question? asked Mr. Disraeli. "I want to see," he cried, "a public man come forward and say what the Irish question is. One says it is a physical question, another a spiritual. Now, it is the absence of the aristocracy; now the absence of railroads. It is the pope one day, potatoes the next. Let us consider Ireland, as we should any other country similarly situated, in our closets. Then we shall see a teeming population which, with reference to the cultivated soil, is denser to the square mile than that of China, created solely by agriculture, with none of those sources of wealth which are developed with civilization, and sustained consequently upon the

lowest conceivable diet; so that in case of failure they have no other means of subsistence upon which they can fall back. That dense population in extreme distress inhabit an island where there is an established church which is not their church; and a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in distant capitals. Thus you have a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien church; and, in addition, the weakest executive in the world. That is the Irish question."

How, then, were these evils to be remedied? By a strong executive, a just administration, and ecclesiastical equality, he answered. Grant these, and you would have order in Ireland; the improvement of the physical condition of the people would follow—not very rapidly, perhaps; but what were fifty years even in the history of a nation? If these recommendations were adopted, in fifty years hence the men who should succeed the present generation in parliament would find the people of Ireland a contented and thriving peasantry. But we should not be deterred by difficulties—everything great was difficult. The Tory party was now in power, and the Tories had ever been the friends of Ireland. Was it denied? Was it the Tory party that introduced the penal code? It was not the Tory party that made a factitious aristocracy out of the plunder of the church. The penal code had been introduced, and at the same time a new spirit had been infused into what was called the Protestant church of Ireland—a Puritan spirit; and from that moment the Church of Ireland lost all its influence, and then those unfortunate consequences which have ensued had their origin. "Yet," said the speaker, "at every period when Tory politics and Tory statesmen have succeeded in breaking through the powerful trammels of Whig policy, you will invariably observe that there has been a hope for Ireland—a streak of light observable in its gloomy horizon. Did not Mr. Pitt, the last of Tory statesmen, propose measures for the settlement

of Ireland, which, had they been agreed to by parliament, would have saved Ireland from her present condition? You would have had the Roman Catholics of Ireland emancipated at a very early period, and you would have had the church question, too, settled at a very early period. . . . If we want permanently to settle Irish affairs with credit to ourselves, and to the satisfaction of the Irish people, we must reconstruct the social system of that country, and we must commence by organizing a very comprehensive and pervading executive. When we have done this, and got the administration of justice into our hands, we should, perhaps, find a less necessity for legislation for Ireland than has been considered requisite. . . . I look to no foreign, no illegitimate influences for bringing about that result—not to the passions of the Irish people, not to the machinations of their demagogues, not to the intrigues of distant nations, but to a power far more influential, far more benignant—a power more recently risen in the world, not yet sufficiently recognized."—[*A Voice*: "What, 'Young England?'"]—"No, not Young England," retorted Mr. Disraeli, "but a power which Young England respects—that irresistible law of our modern civilization which has decreed that the system which cannot bear discussion is doomed."

Let us here say a few words respecting the new association which, during the earlier years of the Peel administration, was sneered at as "Young England." The late Lord Beaconsfield was always a great believer in the power and efficacy of youth. The sunshine of life in his eyes was youth, all the rest was but the after glow. Middle age, with its caution gained by experience; old age, with its selfishness caused by neglect, were no doubt useful elements in their way in the government of mankind; but youth when able, when energetic, when generous, carried all before it—it was divine. Mr. Disraeli thus eulogises its power and the activity of its ambition in "*Coningsby*," a novel representing the views of "Young

England," and which for its literary finish, its brilliant dialogue, its exquisite analysis of character, and the fidelity of its historical narrative, is the finest political novel in our language:—

"For life in general," remarks Sidonia, one of the chief characters of the book, after eulogising the power and opportunities of gifted youth. "Youth is a blunder; Manhood a struggle; Old Age a regret. Do not suppose," he added, smiling, "that I hold that youth is genius; all that I say is, that genius, when young, is divine. Why, the greatest captains of ancient and modern times both conquered Italy at five-and-twenty! Youth, extreme youth, overthrew the Persian empire. Don John of Austria won Lepanto at twenty-five, the greatest battle of modern times; had it not been for the jealousy of Philip, the next year he would have been Emperor of Mauritania. Gaston de Foix was only twenty-two when he stood a victor on the plain of Ravenna. Every one remembers Condé and Rocroy at the same age. Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight. Look at his captains: that wonderful Duke of Weimar, only thirty-six when he died. Banier himself, after all his miracles, died at forty-five. Cortes was little more than thirty when he gazed upon the golden cupolas of Mexico. When Maurice of Saxony died at thirty-two, all Europe acknowledged the loss of the greatest captain and the 'profoundest statesman of the age. Then there is Nelson, Clive; but these are warriors, and perhaps you may think there are greater things than war. I do not: I worship the Lord of Hosts. But take the most illustrious achievements of civil prudence. Innocent III., the greatest of the popes, was the despot of Christendom at thirty-seven. John de Medici was a cardinal at fifteen, and according to Guicciardini, baffled with his statecraft Ferdinand of Arragon himself. He was pope as Leo X. at thirty-seven. Luther robbed even him of his richest province at thirty-five. Take Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley,

they worked with young brains. Ignatius was only thirty when he made his pilgrimage and wrote the 'Spiritual Exercises.' Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen, and died at thirty-seven, the greatest of Frenchmen. "Ah! that fatal thirty-seven, which reminds me of Byron, greater even as a man than a writer. Was it experience that guided the pencil of Raphael when he painted the palaces of Rome? He, too died at thirty-seven. Richelieu was secretary of state at thirty-one. Well then, there were Bolingbroke and Pitt, both ministers before other men left off cricket. Grotius was in great practice at seventeen, and attorney-general at twenty-four. And Acquaviva was general of the Jesuits, ruled every cabinet in Europe, and colonized America before he was thirty-seven. What a career! . . . But it is needless to multiply instances! *The history of heroes is the history of youth.*"

Of the club of young men who banded themselves together to carry out the enthusiastic policy of "Young England," Mr. Disraeli was the chief—its presiding and inspiring genius. With him were associated Lord John Manners, his staunch friend and supporter throughout the whole of his political career; the brilliant George Sydney-Smythe; Henry Hope, the son of the author of "Anastasius;" Monckton Milnes, the poet; Faber, who afterwards completed his Tractarianism by embracing the faith of Rome, and others of lesser note. The animating spirit of the new creed was that the salvation of the country was to proceed from its youth, the "new generation:"—

"I have immense faith in the new generation," says Millbank, one of the heroes in the novel "Coningsby."

"It is a holy thing to see a state saved by its youth," said Coningsby; and then he added in a tone of humility, if not of depression, "But what a task! What a variety of qualities, what a combination of circumstances, is requisite! What bright abilities and what noble patience! What

confidence from the people, what favour from the Most High!"

The faith of the "new generation" might be sentimental, but it was to be at the same time eminently practical. The higher classes were to visit the cottages of the poor, and by sympathy, kindly charity, and gentle counsel, bridge over the gulf which separated "the two nations." Henceforth the peer and the pauper were not to be the strangers they had been to each other; the peer was to lose his pride, the pauper his prejudices. The Church was to be no longer the mechanism of a creed, but a real, animating influence; once more her doors were to be thrown open to all classes, her walls thronged with worshippers, her priests alive to the mission for which they had been consecrated, and the piety which had built our monasteries and founded our chapels once more to be restored in all its purity and vigour. Thus sang the poet of the Fraternity—

"Yes! through the Church must come the healing power,
To bind our wounds in this tumultuous hour;
From her old courts and altar-steps must flow
The streams of grace that shall assuage our woe."

Alms-giving was to be practised as described by Mr. Lyle in "Coningsby," and as sung by Lord John Manners:—

"The daily beadsman waiting for his bread,
Where good and bad were all, unquestioned, fed;
For then it was not to our rulers known
That God was mindful of the first alone;
The monks still practised their dear Lord's
command,
And rained their charity throughout the land."

In short, through the mission of "Young England" religion was to be restored, poverty repressed, caste-exclusiveness to be exchanged for liberality of feeling, and mankind taught that there was something higher than the cold philosophy of Bentham, something nobler than the culpable self-denial inculcated by Malthus. The apostles of the new faith met with much ridicule in their day, yet the creed they taught was a holy and unselfish one. It did its work

well, and to its example we owe, in no small measure, our churches free and filled, our charity organization societies, our workmen's clubs, our homes, asylums, and refuges, and the other numerous institutions at the present day which have for their object the spread of religion, the advancement of education, and the mitigation of the miseries of humanity.

Toward the close of the year 1844 Mr. Disraeli, as the leader of the school of "Young England," was asked to deliver a lecture at the Manchester Athenæum—an institution which, after struggling against various pecuniary difficulties, was at last successfully established. The member for Shrewsbury chose as his subject the "Acquirement of Knowledge," and the lecture he delivered on that occasion, though not to be met with in the published speeches of Mr. Disraeli, nor alluded to in any of his works, is fully worthy of preservation. A young man—and in politics, as at the bar, a man under forty is still young—busy as a politician and as an author, does not always care to come forward, and on a local platform trouble himself to present the truths and sound moral advice which are conspicuous in this lecture. Mr. Disraeli was, however, to address the youth of a great town, and such an audience always commanded his best efforts. He began by congratulating the Athenæum upon having successfully surmounted the obstacles it had at first to encounter, and being now definitely established as a useful and prosperous institution with a valuable library, a news room, a lecture hall, and a gymnasium. The object of its founders was excellent. "It is difficult to conceive," he said, "how a nobler purpose, if for a moment we dilate upon it, could have animated your intentions. When we remember the class of your community for which this institution was particularly adapted—when we conceive, difficult as it is, surrounded as we now are with luxury and pleasure—when we attempt to picture to our imaginations what is the position of a youth, perhaps of

very tender years, sent, as I am informed is very frequently the case, from a remote district, to form his fortunes in this great metropolis of labour and of science—when we think of that youth, tender in age, with no domestic hearth to soothe and stimulate, to counsel or control—when we picture him to ourselves after a day of indefatigable toil, left to his lonely evenings and his meagre lodgings without a friend and without a counsellor, flying to dissipation from sheer want of distraction, and perhaps involved in vice before he is conscious of the fatal net that is surrounding him—what a contrast to his position does it offer when we picture him to ourselves with a feeling of self-confidence, which supports and sustains him after his day of toil, entering a great establishment where everything that can satisfy curiosity, that can form taste, that can elevate the soul of man, and lead to noble thoughts and honourable intentions, surrounds him! When we think of the convenience and the comfort, the kindness and the sympathy which, with a due decorum of manners, he is sure to command—this youth, who but a few hours before was a stranger—viewing an institution like the present only in this limited aspect, one must regard it as a great harbour of intellectual refuge and social propriety.”

He hoped that so useful an institution would not be permitted to collapse. He looked upon it as part of that great educational movement which was the noble and ennobling characteristic of the age in which they lived. To diffuse knowledge was the great duty of mankind. It was knowledge that equalized the social condition of man—that gave to all, however different their political position, passions which were in common, and enjoyments which were universal. Knowledge was like the mystic ladder in the patriarch’s dream. Its base rested on the primeval earth—its crest was lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean; while the great authors who for traditionary ages had held the chain of science and philosophy, of poesy and

erudition, were the angels ascending and descending the sacred scale, and maintaining, as it were, the communication between man and heaven. “Heretofore,” he said, “society was established necessarily on a very different principle to that which is now its basis. As civilization has gradually progressed, it has equalized the physical qualities of man. Instead of the strong arm it is the strong head that is now the moving principle of society. You have disenthroned Force, and placed on her high seat Intelligence; and the necessary consequence of this great revolution is, that it has become the duty and the delight equally of every citizen to cultivate his faculties. The prince of all philosophy has told you, in an immortal apophthegm so familiar to you all that it is written now in your halls and chambers, ‘Knowledge is power.’ If that memorable passage had been pursued by the student who first announced this discovery of that great man to society, he would have found an oracle not less striking, and in my mind certainly not less true; for Lord Bacon has not only said that ‘knowledge is power,’ but living one century after the discovery of the printing-press, he has also announced to the world that ‘knowledge is pleasure.’ Why, when the great body of mankind had become familiar with this great discovery—when they learned that a new source was opened to them of influence and enjoyment, is it wonderful that from that hour the heart of nations has palpitated with the desire of becoming acquainted with all that has happened, and with speculating on what may occur? It has indeed produced upon the popular intellect an influence almost as great as—I might say analogous to—the great change which was produced upon the old commercial world by the discovery of the Americas. A new standard of value was introduced, and, after this, to be distinguished, man must be intellectual.”

Knowledge was no longer a lonely hermit, that offered an occasional and captivating hospitality to some wandering pilgrim;

knowledge was now found in the market-place a citizen, and a leader of citizens. Then, mindful of the audience he was especially addressing, and that he was the apostle to the new generation which was to save the state from atheism in religion, from republicanism in politics, and from immorality in philosophy, he thus spoke to the youth of Manchester. The conclusion of his speech is as practical and high-souled as anything he ever uttered, and the youth of other towns besides Manchester might do worse than take to heart the teaching contained in this gospel of Young Englandism:—

“I would say one word now to those for whom this institution is not entirely, but principally, formed. I would address myself to the youth on whom the hopes of all societies repose and depend. I doubt not that they feel conscious of the position which they occupy—a position which, under all circumstances, at all periods, and in every clime and country, is one replete with duty. *The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity*; but the youth I address have duties peculiar to the position which they occupy. They are the rising generation of a society unprecedented in the history of the world, that is at once powerful and new. In other parts of the kingdom the remains of an ancient civilization are prepared to guide, to cultivate, to influence the rising mind; but they are born in a miraculous creation of novel powers, and it is rather a providential instinct that has developed the necessary means of maintaining the order of your new civilization, than the matured foresight of man. This is their inheritance. They will be called on to perform duties—great duties. I, for one, wish for their sakes, and for the sake of our country, that they may be performed greatly. I give to them that counsel which I have ever given to youth, and which I believe to be the wisest and the best—I tell them to aspire. *I believe that the man who does not look up will look down; and that the spirit that does not dare to soar is destined*

perhaps to grovel. Every individual is entitled to aspire to that position which he believes his faculties qualify him to occupy. I know there are some who look with what I believe to be a short-sighted timidity and false prudence upon such views. They are apt to tell us—‘Beware of filling the youthful mind with an impetuous tumult of turbulent fancies; teach him rather to be content with his position; do not induce him to fancy that he is that which he is not, or to aspire to that which he cannot achieve.’ In my mind, these are superficial delusions. *He who enters the world finds his level.* It is the solitary being, the isolated individual alone in his solitude, who may be apt to miscalculate his powers, and misunderstand his character. But action teaches him the truth, even if it be a stern one. Association offers him the best criticism in the world, and I will venture to say that if he belong to this Athenæum, though when he enters it he may think himself a genius, if nature has not given him a creative and passionate soul, before a week has elapsed he will become a very sober-minded individual. I wish to damp no youthful ardour. I can conceive what opportunities such an institution as this would have afforded to the suggestive mind of a youthful Arkwright. I can conceive what a nursing-mother such an institution must have been to the brooding genius of your illustrious and venerated Dalton. It is the asylum of the self-formed; it is the counsellor of those who want counsel; but it is not a guide that will mislead, and it is the last place that will fill the mind of man with false ideas and false conceptions. He reads a newspaper, and his conceit oozes out after reading a leading article. He refers to the library, and the calm wisdom of centuries and sages moderates the rash impulse of juvenescence. He finds new truths in the lecture-room, and he goes home with a conviction that he is not so learned as he imagined. In the discussion of a great question with his equals in station, perhaps he finds he has his

superiors in intellect. *These are the means by which the mind of man is brought to a healthy state, by which that self-knowledge that always has been lauded by sages may be most securely attained.* It is a rule of universal virtue, and from the senate to the counting-house will be found of universal application. Then, to the youth of Manchester, representing the civic youth of this great county and this great district, I now appeal. Let it never be said again that the fortunes of this institution were in danger. Let them take advantage of this hour of prosperity calmly to examine and deeply to comprehend the character of that institution in which their best interests are involved, and which for them may afford a relaxation which brings no pang, and yields information which may bear them to fortune. It is to them I appeal with confidence, because I feel I am pleading their cause—with confidence, because in them I repose my hopes. When nations fall, it is because a degenerate race intervenes between the class that created and the class that is doomed. Let them, then, remember what has been done for them. The leaders of their community have not been remiss in regard to their interests. Let them remember that, when the inheritance devolves upon them, *they are not only to enjoy, but to improve.* They will some day succeed to the high places of this great community; let them recollect those who lighted the way for them; and when they have wealth, when they have authority, when they have power, let it not be said that they were deficient in public virtue and public spirit. When the torch is delivered to them, let them also light the path of human progress to educated man."

We are now approaching the period when the genius of the subject of this biography was first to exhibit itself in so marked a manner as to be recognized both by friend and foe, and to raise him at one bound to a position of supreme authority. He had closely watched the tactics of the prime minister, and the conclusion

was gradually forcing itself upon his mind that Sir Robert Peel was not the organizing and controlling spirit he had imagined him to be. He saw him almost entirely dependent upon others, paying servile heed to the wishes of the Opposition, listening helplessly to the suggestions of leagues for this measure and of associations for that measure, to the great danger of the cause he professed, and to the following he was supposed to lead. As the agitation with regard to free trade developed, Mr. Disraeli was the first to observe that the prime minister did not seem sure of himself. There was an indecision in his movements and a silent yielding to external influences which, to the member for Shrewsbury, augured ill for the cause which had borne Sir Robert Peel upon its tide to office. Mr. Disraeli and those who thought with him had no objection to the principles of free trade in the abstract—it was an old Tory measure, since Pitt was its first advocate—provided they rested upon a sound basis. He would give and take, but he would not consent to give without also being permitted to take. He knew, as we all know, that in the abstract the teaching of the free traders could not be disputed. It was as plain as that two and two made four. Let each nation freely interchange its respective produce—let the country enriched by coal and iron change its manufactures for the grain and wine and silk of countries whose soil and climate are specially adapted for the production of such articles—and in the long run both the consuming and producing classes will reap the benefit. But the free trade must not be all on one side. If protection was to be abolished, reciprocity should be substituted; if French wines and French silks were to enter British ports free of duty, British cotton and British cutlery should be allowed, on the same terms, to be stored up in the warehouses on French quays. Gladly would we receive the grain, and hemp, and hides, and tallow from the northern powers exempt from taxation,

provided we saw the ports of Russia and Sweden, Denmark and Germany, acting with the same liberality towards our hardware, our cutlery, and the produce of our factories. But to glut our markets with foreign goods imported duty free, whilst British goods exported to foreign ports would only be admitted on the payment of heavy imposts, was a most suicidal policy—a policy which could only be carried out at the expense of several of our most important interests. Such were the views then held by Mr. Disraeli and the Protectionists; and it was because the member for Shrewsbury observed the prime minister gradually forsaking the cause he had vowed to support, and insidiously abandoning the party that had led him to power, that those bitter strictures were passed upon his conduct in the debates of 1845–46—that “he was a parliamentary middle-man who bamboozled one party and plundered another;” that he “caught the Whigs bathing, and walked away with their clothes. He has left them in the full enjoyment of their liberal position, and he is himself a strict conservative of their garments;” that he was “a watcher of the atmosphere—a man who takes his observations, and when he finds the wind in a particular quarter, trims his sails to suit it.” “Such a man,” cried the chagrined Protectionist, “may be a powerful minister, but he is no more a great statesman than the man who gets up behind a carriage is a great whip.”

Mr. Disraeli was not taken by surprise at the silent conversion of the prime minister. Months before the repeal of the corn laws he had bade all Tories be on their guard, and had boldly stated that Protection in 1845 was in the same plight as Protestantism had been in 1828—about to be betrayed by the very man who had promised to defend it. Then, as Sir Robert Peel played more and more into the hands of the leaguers, Mr. Disraeli openly severed himself from his former leader, and by all the arts of the most brilliant generalship, gradually became the mouthpiece of the

dissatisfied section of the Tory party. “The right honourable gentleman,” he cried, “came into power on the strength of our votes, but he would rely for the permanency of his ministry on his political opponents. He may be right—he may even, to a certain extent, be successful—in pursuing this line of conduct which he has adopted—in menacing his friends and cringing to his opponents; but I for one am disposed to look upon it as a success tending neither to the honour of the House nor to his own credit.” He spoke still more bitterly of the conduct of Peel on another occasion, when the agricultural interest was before the House, and summed up the character of the government in a phrase which will long be remembered.

“Why, what has the right honourable gentleman *not* done for agriculture?” he sneered, when the country party expressed themselves dissatisfied. “Before the meeting of parliament, the right honourable gentleman reconstructed his cabinet, and left out the minister of trade. There was a great compliment to agriculture! It was the most marked thing I know. The agriculturists, then, ought to be satisfied. And yet they complain! . . . What do they want? Not this tax to be taken off, or this act to be done. No. They complain of the ‘conduct’ of the right honourable gentleman. There is no doubt a difference in the right honourable gentleman’s demeanour as leader of the Opposition and minister of the Crown. But that is the old story; you must not contrast too strongly the hours of courtship with the years of possession. It is very true that the right honourable gentleman’s conduct is different. I remember him making his Protection speeches. They were the best speeches I ever heard. It was a great thing to hear the right honourable gentleman say, ‘I would sooner be the leader of the gentlemen of England than possess the confidence of sovereigns.’ That was a grand thing. We do not hear much of the ‘gentlemen of England’ now. But what of that? They have the pleasure

of memory—the charm of reminiscences. They were his first love; and though he may not kneel to them now as in the hour of passion, still they can recall the past; and nothing is more useless and unwise than these scenes of crimination and reproach, for we know that, in all these cases, when the beloved object has ceased to charm, it is in vain to appeal to the feelings. You know that this is true. Every man almost has gone through it. My honourable friends reproach the right honourable gentleman. The right honourable gentleman does what he can to keep them quiet; he sometimes takes refuge in arrogant silence, and sometimes he treats them with haughty frigidity; and if they know anything of human nature they would take the hint and shut their mouths. But they won't. And what then happens? What happens under all such circumstances? The right honourable gentleman being compelled to interfere, sends down his valet, who says, in the genteel manner, 'We can have no whining here.'* And that, sir, is exactly the case of the great agricultural interest—that beauty which everybody wooed, and one deluded. There is a fatality in such charms, and we now seem to approach the catastrophe of her career. Protection appears to be in about the same condition that Protestantism was in in 1828. The country will draw its moral. For my part, if we are to have free trade, I, who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the honourable member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden), than by one who, through skilful parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and a great party. For myself,

* Mr. Cobden had moved for a select committee to inquire into the causes and extent of the alleged existing agricultural distress, and into the effect of legislative protection upon the interests of landowners, tenant-farmers, and farm labourers. The motion was opposed on behalf of the government by Mr. Sidney Herbert, the secretary at war, in a rather indiscreet speech, in the course of which he said that "it was distasteful to him, as a member of the agricultural body, to be always coming to parliament whining for protection." Mr. Disraeli's allusion to this expression *whining* was received with tremendous cheering and roars of laughter from the Opposition.

I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a *Conservative government is an organized hypocrisy.*"

Let us briefly sketch the history of the proceedings of this "organized hypocrisy." From the general principles of free trade Sir Robert Peel never at any time withheld his approval. "I believe," he said, when laying his new tariff before the House of Commons, "that on the general principles of free trade there is now no great difference of opinion; and that all agree in the general rule that we 'should purchase in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.'" From the application of these principles he, however, excepted the sugar duties and the corn laws. He held that the abolition of the duties on corn would deal a most severe blow to the agricultural interest at home, whilst to remit the taxation on sugar would visit hardly upon our West India colonies, already terribly crippled by the emancipation of their slaves. At this time there were four great parties in the state, each maintaining different views upon this important question. There were the Whigs, who were now in favour of a fixed duty upon corn; there were the Tories, who favoured a varying duty; there were the ultra-Protectionists, who objected to any modification of the corn laws; and there were the Free Traders, who contested for the abolition of all duties upon corn. Sir Robert Peel, on taking office, was in favour of a varying duty; in the present agitation of the country he felt himself bound to re-consider the state of the laws affecting the importation of corn, and he believed that by the adoption of a sliding scale the compromise he so dearly loved would be effected between severe protection on the one hand and total abolition on the other. Accordingly he proposed that when home-grown wheat was at 50s. and under 51s.

per quarter, the duty on foreign corn should stand at 20s.; when home-grown wheat rose to 54s., the duty should decline to 18s., and so on, until when home-grown wheat rose to 75s. and upwards, the duty should sink to 1s. By the adoption of this plan he considered that the price of wheat would be kept at a moderate level.

But as the efforts of the corn law league increased in their intensity, as their teaching daily made fresh converts, and as the lower orders were now as determined to have the corn laws repealed as they had been a few years ago to pass the Reform Bill, it began gradually to dawn both upon Sir Robert Peel as leader of the Conservatives, and upon Lord John Russell as leader of the Whigs, that the existing state of things could not be maintained. This opinion was all the more confirmed by an alarming evil that now appeared upon the scene. The poorer Irish, owing to their improvident habits, their lack of energy, and their natural love for the uncertainties of a half savage mode of existence, were entirely dependent for their means of subsistence upon the potato, and there was every prospect of this form of nourishment failing them owing to a terrible blight which had now attacked the roots of this vegetable. The Peel cabinet, in the midst of the agitation upon corn-law repeal, were called upon to face an Irish potato famine, fraught with all the miseries and seditions attendant upon such a visitation. The prime minister saw that in the event of so awful a catastrophe, the maintenance of an artificial restriction for the benefit of a particular class would excite the most dangerous criticism. He felt that the only solution of the difficulty, in spite of his past objections, was that advocated by the Manchester school—the absolute repeal of the corn laws. As in the days of the Catholic agitation, so now in the days of agrarian agitation, it was Ireland that forced the hand of the government.

The position of Sir Robert Peel was embarrassing. He had taken office pledged to

resist repeal; his followers were composed of men greatly dependent upon the land for their rents and resources; to the squire and the farmer the abolition of the duties on corn would result in a grave loss of income. The agricultural interest had already murmured against the removal of various protective duties in the new tariff of the premier, and it was indisposed to yield further concessions. Already, as we have seen, "one solitary voice" on the Tory side of the House, with all the wit of mordant epigram, had declared that protection was on the eve of betrayal, and that it behoved its followers to keep strict vigil over their interests. Lord John Russell, however, was fettered by no such obstacles. To the mass who made up the larger portion of his supporters—the bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and smaller tradespeople, who derived their income from capital and not from land—the repeal of the corn laws would be a measure warmly welcomed, whilst its only opponents would be a few Whigs of the severer type. Thus, as matters then stood, both the head of the government and the leader of the Opposition had arrived at the same conclusion that the laws protective of agriculture must be expunged from the statute-book. The question now arose by whom were they to be repealed—by the Whigs under Lord John, or by the Conservatives "educated" up to the new opinions by their chief?

For some weeks Sir Robert hesitated as to the course to be adopted; then he was startled into sudden action by the famous Edinburgh letter. Whilst on a visit, in the November of 1845, to the "Modern Athens," Lord John Russell had addressed a letter to his London constituents, commenting upon the state of affairs. In this now historical epistle he declared that the present condition of the country, in regard to its supply of food, could not be viewed without apprehension. "Forethought and bold precaution," he said, "may avert any serious evils—indecision and procrastination may produce

a state of suffering which it is frightful to contemplate." Parliament, he hinted in this cunning bid for office, had met and separated without affording any promise of seasonable relief; it became, therefore, the duty of the queen's subjects to consider how the impending calamities could be averted, or at least mitigated. To effect this there was but one plan, the repeal of the corn laws. He candidly confessed that his views on this subject had undergone a great alteration. "I used to be of opinion," wrote Lord John, "that corn was an exception to the general rules of political economy; but observation and experience have convinced me that we ought to abstain from all interference with the supply of food. Neither a government nor a legislature can ever regulate the corn market with the beneficial effects which the entire freedom of sale and purchase are sure of themselves to produce." Let us then, he concluded, unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime among the people.

After so frank an expression of opinion on the part of his rival, Sir Robert Peel saw that further hesitation or delay would be most dangerous to his position. He summoned a cabinet council, and endeavoured to convince his colleagues that the entire repeal of the corn laws had now become not a matter of choice, but of political necessity. Like most short-sighted men, his inspection of all that came within his immediate ken was most minute, and he saw what few of the opponents of free trade at that time were able to perceive. As a rule, the protection of most industries only directly affects the minority; consequently the opposition such protection encounters is limited to the clique whose welfare is being especially affected. The protection of pig iron might agitate a class, but it would not excite a nation, for the simple reason that a large portion of the

country can live independent of the rise and fall in the value of pig iron. The protection of corn, the most important article of food in the country, was, however, a very different matter. With the exception of the agricultural interest, all the consuming classes were on this occasion united in their efforts to remove the restriction upon the manufacture of cheap bread. Consequently the Protectionists were a coterie against the nation, and in a free country like ours, when a minority endeavours to suppress the views of an active and powerful majority, the issue of the struggle can have but one end. Sir Robert Peel saw that the repeal of the corn laws had developed from a party question into a national question, and that resistance to the cry was daily becoming more and more impracticable. Lord Stanley and the advocates of protection, however, thought differently, and declined to adopt the opinions which the premier now held. They refused to be "educated." Unable to convert his cabinet to his views, there was only one honourable course for Sir Robert Peel to pursue. Convinced that, if the corn laws were retained, Ireland would be laid low by famine, and throughout Great Britain there would be scarcity of food, he tendered his resignation, and it was accepted. Lord John Russell was intrusted with the task of forming an administration, but, owing to the refusal of Earl Grey to unite with him, he was unable to comply with his sovereign's commands. Lord Stanley felt that he was not strong enough to succeed where Lord John had failed, and the consequence was that Sir Robert Peel, pledged to carry repeal, resumed his post as prime minister. With the exception of Lord Stanley, who was succeeded by Mr. Gladstone, the ministry was the same as before the resignation of Sir Robert.

Never in the whole annals of parliamentary history was change of opinion more bitterly and more fiercely criticised than the conversion of Sir Robert Peel from the principles

of protection to those of free trade. It was Mr. Disraeli's opportunity, and he availed himself to the full of all the advantages the situation offered. A large section of the Tory party considered themselves betrayed by the leader they had trusted, and they were burning to express their indignation at the premier's conduct, and to exhibit their opposition to a measure which they deemed would usher in the ruin of the agricultural cause. They were, however, simple country gentlemen not given to eloquence, and somewhat in awe, like boys of their schoolmaster, of the power and position of the cold, repellent Sir Robert Peel. They longed to denounce the arch-hypocrite and crush him with their invective; but when they rose to address the House, their ideas passed away, and their abuse flowed tame and powerless from their passionate lips. And now Mr. Disraeli stepped in. Even in the opinion of his enemies his conduct on this occasion showed consummate tact and generalship. All the wealth of his eloquence, all his wit, his polished satire, his instinctive knowledge of the arts by which men are united and controlled, he now devoted to the cause of the forsaken Protectionists. The oratory they did not possess, the invectives they could not launch, the indignation they were powerless to express, were all centred in him, and through him the hate of the country party was focussed against the object of their wrath. Fierce as have been the denunciations which the House of Commons, in the course of its history, has had to listen to, it has never witnessed anything finer in the form of polished invective, and of humorous yet biting similes, than the philippics which the member for Shrewsbury now directed against the prime minister, until the cold, self-contained man writhed in torture, and at one time vowed to challenge in mortal combat his pitiless critic.

The time had indeed come when the House was pleased to hear Mr. Disraeli. Night after night, as he rose to the attack, he was listened to in the stillest

silence, save when cheer after cheer broke from the lips of his followers, showing that the barbed arrow had winged its flight and had struck home. He was now no mere member of the House of Commons, but the representative of the cause of protection, and the nominal lieutenant but actual leader of that section of the Conservative party which had separated itself from the control of the prime minister. Nor in this opposition was there anything scheming or insincere. Mr. Disraeli looked upon the policy of protection as sound and logical. He held that if the corn laws were repealed, the farmers would be ruined, and the ruin of the farmers would destroy the landlord interest, and the overthrow of the landlord interest would be the triumph of democracy over constitutionalism. Free trade in corn would lead to free trade in other commodities; and unless the principle was adopted by other nations, of which there was then no sign, it would act to the detriment of the commercial interests of the country. Has he been so completely wrong in his surmises? Are the advocates of free trade as sanguine now of their policy as they were in the past? With the exception of England, the commercial tendency of every country is setting more and more towards protection. And can we look with unmixed satisfaction upon the present condition of England? Our farmers, unable to compete with the importation of foreign grain and American meat, are throwing up their farms and seeking pastures new in the colonies and the United States, much to the crippling of the resources of the landlord.* Our cotton and woollen manu-

* "Meanwhile it may safely be urged that no more important question ever demanded the serious attention of our government than how it may be possible to restore vitality and hope to the discouraged and declining agricultural interest in these islands. *In England alone there are at this moment many thousands of acres—especially where the land is strong and fitted for the growth of wheat—lying idle from lack of tenants. Tenants with capital—and their name is legion—are to be found by the score who despair of being able to make two ends meet, and have withdrawn from the pursuit of agriculture, in which they were reared, and for which alone they are fitted. What is to be done? The question concerns Mr. Bright and the representatives of manufacturing industries not less than noblemen and gentlemen who are 'acred up to the chin.'*"—*Morning Paper*, June 9, 1881.

facturers openly assert that they are unable to compete with the goods of foreign countries admitted untaxed into our ports. In spite of our coal and iron, our machinists complain that, owing to the cheapness of foreign labour, French and Belgian machinery can be imported at a less cost than it takes to produce in this country. What have become of the looms of the silk-weavers of Coventry and Spitalfields, of our ship-building trade on the Thames, of our sugar refineries? On all sides we hear of the dullness of trade, of the decline in the carrying trade of our great railway companies, of the ruinous conflicts between labour and capital, and that trade is fast leaving the country. In spite of the prophets who assured us that a reaction in England was impossible against free trade, have we not heard, not silent and hole-in-the-corner murmurs, but opinions openly expressed as to the advisability of returning to limited protection, or for reciprocity in free trade?*

Though the ruling spirit of the Protectionists at this time was undoubtedly Mr. Disraeli, the nominal leader of the disaffected party was Lord George Bentinck, a son of the Duke of Portland. Lord George had "sat in eight parliaments without having taken part in any great

* A leading journal thus comments upon the Preston election, which was gained by the Tory candidate openly advocating a return to limited protection:—"Mr. Eceyrd avowed himself a qualified Protectionist, and the operatives said ditto with enthusiasm, in spite of skilful appeals borrowed from the old anti-corn law days—though they have long since lost their charm—to pronounce for the big loaf against the little one. Is it, then, to be inferred that the Preston working men are Protectionists? Opinion lately has ripened so fast in a particular direction that, improbable as it may seem, there may be ground before long to discuss a much wider question—that is, whether the English operatives as a whole are, if not Protectionists, at least in favour of reciprocity to the extent of imposing duties on manufactured goods. . . . It is not a little remarkable that the demand for reciprocity, or for something in the nature of revived protection for native industry of all kinds, emanates at this moment chiefly from the manufacturing classes. . . . The truth is that dull trade and hostile tariffs are working a silent revolution in the sentiments of large classes who have never thought out economical questions at all, but who are simply influenced by considerations of self-interest; and, unless trade speedily revive, the politicians who appeal to these considerations are sure to gain suffrages. Even Mr. Gladstone's reply to the deputation that waited on him about the sugar bounties betrays a certain deference to this feeling. Its further developments will be waited with curiosity."

debate." In his youth he had seen service as a soldier, and at one time had been private secretary to George Canning, who had married a sister of the Duchess of Portland; he had long been on the turf, and had occupied himself with pursuits not generally associated with the drudgery and application of statesmanship; disgusted, in the first instance, with the conduct of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel towards Canning, he withdrew his support from the Tories and upheld the policy of the Whigs; on the secession of Lord Stanley he became a member of the great Conservative Opposition until, again disgusted with the "treachery" of Sir Robert Peel, he enrolled himself amongst the Protectionists, and, from his name and talents, was raised to the position of leader of the deserted cause. "During three years," writes Mr. Disraeli, "under circumstances of great difficulty, he displayed some of the highest qualities of political life; courage and a lofty spirit; a mastery of details which experience usually alone confers; a quick apprehension and a clear intelligence; indomitable firmness; promptness, punctuality, and perseverance which never failed; an energy seldom surpassed; and a capacity for labour which was perhaps never equalled." Still, in spite of these gifts, it is very doubtful whether, if it had not been for the advocacy of Mr. Disraeli, the Protectionists would have been able to make common cause against the prime minister, and finally drive him from power. It was the eloquence, the wit, the sarcasms of the member for Shrewsbury, and of him alone, that made the Protectionists formidable, and under his splendid generalship transformed them from a section into a party, and led them on to a victory they had never dreamed of. Like a second Coriolanus, he could say, "Alone I did it."

After Peel's restoration to power, Mr. Disraeli at once showed the course he intended to pursue. At the meeting of the Houses, there was an angry debate on the address, and the speech of the member

for Shrewsbury was certainly not inclined to throw oil upon the troubled waters. He opened fire by congratulating the eminent statesman at the head of the government, who having served under four sovereigns, yet only during the last three years had found it necessary to change his convictions on that important topic—the corn laws—which must have presented itself for more than a quarter of a century to his consideration. Then in one of his happiest similes, he compared the policy of Peel to that of a renegade servant of the sultan. “Sir,” he cried, addressing the Speaker amid the cheers and laughter of the House, “there is a difficulty in finding a parallel to the position of the right hon. gentleman in any part of history. The only parallel which I can find is an incident in the late war in the Levant, which was terminated by the policy of the noble lord opposite. I remember when that great struggle was taking place, when the existence of the Turkish empire was at stake, the late sultan, a man of great energy and fertile in resources, was determined to fit out an immense fleet to maintain his empire. Accordingly a vast armament was collected. It consisted of many of the finest ships that were ever built. The crews were picked men, the officers were the ablest that could be found, and both officers and men were rewarded before they fought. There never was an armament which left the Dardanelles similarly appointed since the day of Solyman the Great. The sultan personally witnessed the departure of the fleet; all the muftis prayed for the success of the expedition, as all the muftis here prayed for the success of the last general election. Away went the fleet; but what was the sultan’s consternation when the lord high admiral steered at once into the enemy’s port! Now, sir, the lord high admiral on that occasion was very much misrepresented. He, too, was called a traitor and he, too, vindicated himself. ‘True it is,’ said he, ‘I did place myself at the head of this valiant armada—true it is that my sovereign embraced

me—true it is that all the muftis in the empire offered up prayers for my success; but I have an objection to war. I see no use in prolonging the struggle, and the only reason I had for accepting the command was that I might terminate the contest by betraying my master.’ And, sir, these reasons offered by a man of great plausibility, of vast adroitness, have had their effect; for you may be surprised at it, but I assure you it is a fact—which, by the way, the gallant officer opposite (Commander Napier) can testify—that he is at this moment the first lord of the admiralty at Constantinople, under the new reign.”

Then proceeding with his caustic criticisms, he sneered at Peel’s famous advice about registration, which simply meant, he said, “that we were to register to make him a minister;” he described the premier as a man who never originated an idea, a watcher of the atmosphere, and no more entitled to be called a great statesman than the man who got up behind a carriage was entitled to be called a great whip. “Do not then,” he cried, “because you see a great personage giving up his opinions, do not cheer him on, do not yield so ready a reward to political tergiversation. Above all, maintain the line of demarcation between parties; for it is only by maintaining the independence of party that you can maintain the integrity of public men and the power and influence of parliament itself.”

But the attack in which all these minor onslaughts culminated was reserved for the third night of the debate on the repeal of the corn laws. An English audience, though from certain intellectual imperfections it fails to appreciate the incisive invective of French satire, likes hard hitting; and it must be confessed that on that memorable night, the night of May 15, 1846, Mr. Disraeli hit very hard—still it was legitimate fighting, there were no blows below the belt, all were delivered straight from the shoulder, and every stroke told. Mr. Disraeli was not a combative man, but when he fought he fought in earnest; he did not

play with his weapons, nor did he fence with the buttons on his foils. His speech, even at this distance of time, and upon a subject which is never likely to be revived, is full of interest on account of its severity and its smartness. He was not, he said, one of those who had ever spoken with disrespect of that commercial confederation which now exercised so great an influence in this country. Though he disapproved of their doctrines, though he believed from the bottom of his heart that their practice would eventually be as pernicious to the manufacturing interest as to the agricultural interest of this country, still he admired men of abilities who, convinced of a great truth and proud of their energies, banded themselves together for the purpose of supporting it, and came forward devoting their lives to what they considered to be a great cause. This country could only exist by free discussion. If it were once supposed that opinions were to be put down by any other means, then, whatever might be our political opinions, liberty vanished. If they thought the opinions of the Anti-Corn Law League dangerous, if they thought their system was founded on error and must lead to confusion, it was open in a free country like England, for men who held opposite ideas, to resist the League with the same earnestness by all legitimate means—by the same active organization, and by all the intellectual power they could command. But what had happened on this occasion? A body of gentlemen, able and adroit men, came forward and professed contrary doctrines to those of these new economists. They placed themselves at the head of that great popular party who were adverse to their ideas, and professing their opinions, they climbed and clambered into power by having accepted, or rather by having eagerly sought the trust. Hence it followed that the body whom they represented, trusting in their leaders, not unnaturally slumbered at their posts. They concluded that their opinions were repre-

sented in the state. It was not for them or the millions outside the House to come forward and organize a power, in order to meet the hostile movements of Mr. Cobden. No, they trusted to others—to one who, by accepting or rather by seizing that post, obtained the greatest place in the country, and at that moment governed England. And now what had happened? The right honourable gentleman, the first minister, had betrayed his friends, and had sold his party. Let him congratulate himself upon his complete success in having deceived those who so implicitly trusted in him.

This was severe, but the sting was to follow. The conclusion of the speech is too exquisite to admit of extract or compression.

"And now, sir," he said, with folded arms and with that modest downcast look which generally preceded something very pungent and humorous, "And now, sir, I must say, in vindication of the right hon. gentleman, that I think great injustice has been done to him throughout these debates. A perhaps justifiable misconception has universally prevailed. Sir, the right hon. gentleman has been accused of foregone treachery—of long-meditated deception—of a desire unworthy of a great statesman, even if an unprincipled one, of always having intended to abandon the opinions by professing which he rose to power. Sir, I entirely acquit the right hon. gentleman of any such intention. I do it for this reason, that when I examine the career of this minister, which has now filled a great space in the parliamentary history of this country, I find that for between thirty and forty years, from the days of Mr. Horner to the days of the hon. member for Stockport, that right hon. gentleman has traded on the ideas and intelligence of others. His life has been one great appropriation clause. He is a burglar of others' intellect. Search the index of Beatson, from the days of the Conqueror to the termination of the last reign, there is no statesman who has committed political petty larceny on so great a scale. I believe, therefore, when

the right hon. gentleman undertook our cause on either side of the House, that he was perfectly sincere in his advocacy; but as, in the course of discussion, the conventionalisms which he received from us crumbled away in his grasp, feeling no creative power to sustain him with new arguments, feeling no spontaneous sentiments to force upon him conviction, reduced at last to defending the noblest cause, one based on the most high and solemn principles, upon the 'burdens peculiar to agriculture'—the right hon. gentleman, faithful to the law of his nature, imbibed the new doctrines, the more vigorous, bustling, popular, and progressive doctrines, as he had imbibed the doctrines of Mr. Horner—as he had imbibed the doctrines of every leading man in this country for thirty or forty years, with the exception of the doctrine of parliamentary reform, which the Whigs very wisely led the country upon, and did not allow to grow sufficiently mature to fall into the mouth of the right hon. gentleman. Sir, the right hon. gentleman tells us that he does not feel humiliated. Sir, it is impossible for any one to know what are the feelings of another. Feeling depends upon temperament; it depends upon the organization of the animal that feels. But this I will tell the right hon. gentleman, that though he may not feel humiliated, his country ought to feel humiliated. Is it so pleasing to the self-complacency of a great nation, is it so grateful to the pride of England, that one who, from the position he has contrived to occupy, must rank as her foremost citizen, is one of whom it may be said, as Dean Swift said of another minister, that 'he is a gentleman who has the perpetual misfortune to be mistaken!' And, sir, even now, in this last scene of the drama, when the party whom he unintentionally betrayed is to be unintentionally annihilated—even now, in this last scene, the right hon. gentleman, faithful to the law of his being, is going to pass a project which, I believe it is matter of notoriety, is not of his own invention.

It is one which may have been modified, but which I believe has been offered to another government, and by that government has been wisely rejected. Why, sir, these are matters of general notoriety. After the day that the right hon. gentleman made his first exposition of his scheme, a gentleman well known in this House, and learned in all the political secrets behind the scenes, met me, and said, 'Well, what do you think of your chief's plan?' Not knowing exactly what to say, but taking up a phrase which has been much used in the House, I observed, 'Well, I suppose it's a "great and comprehensive" plan.' 'Oh!' he replied, 'we know all about it! It was offered to us! It is not his plan; it's Popkins' plan!' And is England to be governed by 'Popkins' plan?' Will he go to the country with it? Will he go with it to that ancient and famous England that once was governed by statesmen—by Burleighs and by Walsinghams, by Bolingbrokes and by Walpoles, by a Chatham and a Canning—will he go to it with this fantastic scheming of some presumptuous pedant? I will not believe it. I have that confidence in the common sense, I will say the common spirit of our countrymen, that I believe they will not long endure this huckstering tyranny of the treasury bench—these political pedlars that bought their party in the cheapest market, and sold us in the dearest.

"I know, sir, that there are many who believe that the time is gone by when one can appeal to those high and honest impulses that were once the mainstay and the main element of the English character. I know, sir, that we appeal to a people debauched by public gambling—stimulated and encouraged by an inefficient and short-sighted minister. I know that the public mind is polluted with economic fancies; a depraved desire that the rich may become richer without the interference of industry and toil. I know, sir, that all confidence in public men is lost. But, sir, I have faith in the primitive and enduring elements

of the English character. It may be vain now, in the midnight of their intoxication, to tell them that there will be an awakening of bitterness; it may be idle now, in the spring-tide of their economic frenzy, to warn them that there may be an ebb of trouble. But the dark and inevitable hour will arrive. Then, when their spirit is softened by misfortune, they will recur to those principles that made England great, and which, in our belief, can alone keep England great. Then, too, perchance they may remember, not with unkindness, those who, betrayed and deserted, were neither ashamed nor afraid to struggle for the 'good old cause'—the cause with which are associated principles the most popular, sentiments the most entirely national—the cause of labour—the cause of the people—the cause of England."

We know the result. The debate, after having occupied the 11th and 12th of May, was adjourned to the 15th of that month, "when, after a discussion of perhaps unexampled excitement in the House of Commons, the division was called at four o'clock in the morning of Saturday, and, in a House of 560 members, the third reading of the Bill for the Repeal of the Corn Laws was carried by a majority of 98."

The conduct of Sir Robert Peel on this memorable occasion has, as we all know, given rise to much comment and adverse criticism; yet, after a careful review of the state of affairs at that date, and making every allowance for the soured hopes of the Protectionists, it seems to us that harsher measure has been dealt out to him than he deserved. The career of Peel is certainly one open to criticism. As we read his life we are dazzled by no great brilliancy of intellectual power; our pulse does not beat with a quicker throb as we listen to generous thoughts and watch the deeds which elevate men above the dead level of human nature. There is little that is great or noble or chivalrous in his career. Yet, on the other hand, though narrow, commonplace, and perhaps selfish, we can find nothing which

reflects upon his political character. He changed his opinions, but he frankly owned the reasons why he changed them; and though those reasons prove him to be short-sighted and hasty in arriving at his conclusions, yet his honour passes through the trial unscathed. It is unfortunate for a statesman to be perpetually mistaken; but it is certainly better for him to candidly avow that his judgment has been in error than to pursue a policy which he knows to be mischievous, in order to save appearances, and to preserve a culpable consistency. Sir Robert Peel has been accused of treachery for the part he played in repealing the corn laws; but was it possible for him to play any other part, considering the position in which he was placed, and bearing in mind that human nature is not devoid of ambition? He had changed his views with regard to agrarian protection, for on examination he had found that the corn laws were impracticable. He had compared the results of periods of abundance and low prices with periods of scarcity and high prices, and he had come to the conclusion that protection was not tenable. He did not believe that the rate of wages varied with the price of food, or that with high prices wages would necessarily vary in the same ratio. He saw that protection, according to his view of the question, was pernicious. It had been said that because England laboured under a heavy debt and high rate of taxation, she must be protected from competition with foreign industry. He argued differently, for the experience of the last three years had taught him that "a large debt and heavy taxation were best encountered by abundance and cheapness of provisions, which rather alleviated than added to the burden."

Converted to this view—for conversion was not with him a rare occurrence—he endeavoured to impress his own opinions upon his colleagues, but without success. Then feeling that it was impossible for him to oppose any longer the repeal of the corn laws, he tendered his

resignation. Lord John Russell, as we have seen, was unable to constitute a cabinet. The Protectionists under Lord Stanley were not strong enough to take office. Consequently Sir Robert Peel was again sent for, and it fell to him to repeal the hated impost. Where was the treachery? He had avowed his change of opinion; and for the matter of that, if he had changed his opinions upon free trade, so had Lord John Russell; he had endeavoured to bring his cabinet to his way of thinking; he had failed in the attempt, and had given his opponents the opportunity both of abolishing the restrictions upon corn and of confirming the principles of protection; his rivals were unable to avail themselves of his offer, and thus it became his duty to be the instrument in passing this great measure. Where was the treachery? "It appears to me," writes Lord Dalling and Bulwer, "that the fact that he had resigned office on changing his policy, and that he did not return to it until every other ministerial combination had failed, rendered his course on this occasion more clear than on the Catholic question. To accuse him under such circumstances of changing his views, in order to retain his office, is as absurd as unjust. He is not even subject to the charge of retaining power after changing the opinions that he entertained on receiving it. His conduct appears to me to have been dictated by the purest patriotism, and the most complete sacrifice of personal ambition to public motive." Nor did he take credit where it was not due. The repeal of the corn laws was not owing to the efforts of Lord John Russell, nor to the support of the Whigs, nor to the advocacy of Peel and the party he led. "The name," cried Sir Robert, "which ought to be, and will be, associated with the success of these measures, is the name of one who, acting I believe from pure and from disinterested motives, has with untiring energy made appeals to our reason, and has enforced those appeals with an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and

unadorned. The name which ought to be chiefly associated with the success of these measures is the name of Richard Cobden."

The Protectionists, however, declined to take this view of the prime minister. He had divided the party in twain, and had deserted the cause which had placed him in power. He was a traitor, an apostate, a scheming adventurer. One hope now animated their breasts—the hope of revenge. "Proud in their numbers," writes Mr. Disraeli, in his biography of Lord George Bentinck, "confident in their discipline, and elate with their memorable resistance, the protectionist party as a body had always assumed that when the occasion was ripe the career of the minister might be terminated." But how was it to be terminated? How was Sir Robert Peel to be turned out? This was the great question which occupied the musing hours of a Whitsun recess. After much deliberation, it was resolved to oppose the Irish Coercion Bill, which Peel had introduced as a measure of urgent necessity, and had then shelved until the passing of the Corn Bill, in order not to irritate the Irish faction. The Protectionists had never approved of the Coercion Bill; but beneath the magic wand of Peel they had agreed to its first reading. They now resolved to unite with the Whigs and defeat the measure on the second reading. "It is time," cried Lord George Bentinck, "that atonement should be made to the betrayed honour of parliament and the betrayed constituencies of the empire. . . . The time has now come when they who love the treason that has recently been committed, though they hate the traitor, should join with those who sit on the protectionist benches, in showing that they do not approve the recent conduct of ministers." This vindictive cry was no idle threat. The bill came before the House for the second reading. Member after member rose up to advocate it or to oppose it. Then at a late hour of the night the galleries were cleared, the division called, and the question put. We have an account

of the memorable scene that ensued from the pen of Mr. Disraeli, who was a witness of the event he so graphically describes:—

"In almost all previous divisions," he writes, "where the fate of a government had been depending, the vote of every member with scarcely an exception had been anticipated: that was not the case in the present instance, and the direction which members took as they left their seats was anxiously watched. More than a hundred protectionist members followed the minister; more than eighty avoided the division, a few of these, however, had paired; nearly the same number followed Lord George Bentinck. But it was not merely their numbers that attracted the anxious observation of the treasury bench as the Protectionists passed in defile before the minister to the hostile lobby. It was impossible that he could have marked them without emotion: the flower of that great party which had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead them. They were men, to gain whose hearts and the hearts of their fathers had been the aim and exultation of his life. They had extended to him an unlimited confidence and an admiration without stint. They had stood by him in the darkest hour, and had borne him from the depths of political despair to the proudest of living positions. Right or wrong, they were men of honour, breeding, and refinement, high and generous character, great weight and station in the country, which they had ever placed at his disposal. They had been not only his followers, but his friends; had joined in the same pastimes, drank from the same cup, and in the pleasantness of private life had often forgotten together the cares and strife of politics.

"He must have felt something of this, while the Mannors, the Somersets, the Bentincks, the Lowthers, and the Lennoxes, passed before him. And those country gentlemen, 'those gentlemen of England,' of whom, but five years ago, the very same building was ringing with his pride of being the leader—if his heart were hardened to

Sir Charles Burrell, Sir William Jolliffe, Sir Charles Knightly, Sir John Trollope, Sir Edward Kerrison, Sir John Tyrell, he surely must have had a pang, when his eye rested on Sir John Yarde Buller, his choice and pattern country gentleman, whom he had himself selected and invited but six years back to move a vote of want of confidence in the Whig government, in order, against the feeling of the court, to install Sir Robert Peel in their stead.

"They trooped on, all the men of metal and large-acred squires, whose spirit he had so often quickened, and whose counsel he had so often solicited in his fine Conservative speeches in Whitehall Gardens—Mr. Bankes, with a parliamentary name of two centuries, and Mr. Christopher, from that broad Lincolnshire which protection had created; and the Mileses and the Henleys were there; and the Duncombes, the Liddells, and the Yorkes; and Devon had sent there the stout heart of Mr. Buck; and Wiltshire, the pleasant presence of Walter Long. Mr. Newdegate was there, whom Sir Robert had himself recommended to the confidence of the electors of Warwickshire, as one of whom he had the highest hopes; and Mr. Alderman Thompson was there, who, also through Sir Robert's selection, had seconded the assault upon the Whigs, led on by Sir John Buller. But the list is too long; or good names remain behind.

"When Prince Metternich was informed at Dresden, with great ostentation, that the emperor had arrived—'Yes, but without his army,' was the reply. Sir Robert Peel was still first minister of England, as Napoleon remained emperor for a while after Moscow. Each perhaps for a moment had indulged in hope. It is so difficult for those who are on the pinnacle of life to realize disaster. They sometimes contemplate it in their deep and far-seeing calculations, but it is only to imagine a contingency which their resources must surely baffle; they sometimes talk of it to their friends, and oftener of it to their enemies, but it is

only as an insurance of their prosperity and as an offering to propitiate their Nemesis. They never believe in it.

"The news that the government were not only beaten, but by a majority so large as 73, began to circulate. An incredulous murmur passed it along the treasury bench.

"'They say we are beaten by 73!' whispered the most important member of the cabinet in a tone of surprise to Sir Robert Peel.

"Sir Robert did not reply or even turn his head. He looked very grave, and extended his chin, as was his habit when he was annoyed and cared not to speak. He began to comprehend his position, and that the emperor was without his army."

He had lost his army, and he went to Windsor to deliver up the seals of office. On June 29 he informed the House that the queen had accepted the resignation of the cabinet. In withdrawing from his position he briefly reviewed the proceedings of the last five years. He regretted the loss of those who had seceded from him; yet, in carrying the measure which had led to his fall from power, he had been actuated alone by a desire to promote the best interests of the country. He spoke of his defeat as an event not to be regretted, but to be accepted as a just chastisement of his error in having supported principles which he had been

compelled to abandon. His closing words were among the most impressive that had ever fallen from his lips:—

"In relinquishing power," he said in his most solemn tones, and amid the stillest silence, "I shall leave a name severely censured, I fear, by many who, on public grounds, deeply regret the severance of party ties—deeply regret that severance, not from interested or party motives, but from the firm conviction that fidelity to party engagements—the existence and maintenance of a great party—constitutes a powerful instrument of government. I shall surrender power severely censured also by others who, from no interested motives, adhere to the principle of protection, considering the maintenance of it to be essential to the welfare and interests of the country; I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist who, from less honourable motives, clamours for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit; but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice."

CHAPTER V.

WHIG ASCENDANCY.

ON the resignation of Sir Robert Peel, an administration was formed under Lord John Russell, who, of course, took office as first lord of the treasury. Lord Palmerston, who had already made a reputation for himself as a minister, who would not truckle to a foreign power, though the tendency of his policy was then too much towards unnecessary interference, held the seals again as foreign secretary; that dreariest of debaters, but most painstaking of administrators, Sir Charles Wood, controlled our finances as chancellor of the exchequer; Sir George Grey presided over the home office; and Lord Grey was colonial secretary. With the exception of the prime minister and Lord Palmerston, the cabinet was certainly not a brilliant one, and it required all its eloquence and administrative capacity to deal with the grave questions which were springing up on every side, and overclouding with their ominous shade the political horizon. The stability of the government was dependent entirely upon the continuance of the feud between the ex-premier and the protectionists. Three great parties represented the feeling of the House: the Whigs, who were in power; the Conservatives, who still adhered to the fallen fortunes of Sir Robert Peel; and the Protectionists, under the nominal leadership of Lord George Bentinck. Thus on any measure brought up for discussion, a fusion between the Peelites and the Protectionists would place the government in a minority. Sir Robert Peel, however, had no intention of bridging over the existing breach; for he knew that if the Conservatives came into power, he could not hope to be reinstated as head of the cabinet. He resolved, therefore, to support the policy of Lord John Russell. "Peel,"

writes Lord Palmerston, "seems to have made up his mind that, for a year or two, he cannot hope to form a party, and that he must give people a certain time to forget the events of last year; in the meanwhile, it is evident that he does not wish that any other government should be formed out of the people on his side of the House, because of that government he would not be a member. For these reasons, and also because he sincerely thinks it best that we should for the present remain in, he gives us very cordial support, as far as he can without losing his independent position."

On taking his seat in the House of Commons, at the meeting of parliament, Nov. 18, 1847, Mr. Disraeli had ceased to represent Shrewsbury. His brilliant defence of the agricultural interest, the co-leadership he enjoyed with Lord George Bentinck, and the influence he possessed over the Protectionists, all marked him out for the position of a knight of the shire. It was felt that the spokesman of the party which watched over the welfare of the agricultural interest should represent no constituency less than that of a county. By the purchase of his small but charming estate of Hughenden Manor, Mr. Disraeli was now enrolled among the landed gentry of his beloved Buckinghamshire. He was asked to stand for the county, and he gladly accepted the invitation. In his address he alluded to the repeal of the corn laws; he disapproved of that measure. "Notwithstanding this, however, I am not one of those who would abet or attempt factiously or forcibly to repeal the measure of 1846." He appeared before them not as the organ of any section or the nominee of any individual. "All that I can offer you," he

said, "is the devotion of such energies as I possess; all that I aspire to is to serve you as becomes the representative of a great, undivided, and historic county, that has achieved vast results for our popular liberty, our parliamentary reputation, and our national greatness." Then he flattered local vanity, and made the hearts of his Buckinghamshire hearers swell with honest pride. "The parliamentary constitution of England," he cried, "was born in the bosom of the Chiltern Hills, as to this day our parliamentary career is terminated amongst its Hundreds. The parliamentary constitution of England was established when Mr. Hampden rode up to Westminster, surrounded by his neighbours. Buckinghamshire did that for England. It has done more. It gave us the British constitution in the seventeenth century, and it created the British empire in the eighteenth. All the great statesmen of that century were born, or bred, or lived in the county. Throw your eye over the list—it is a glorious one—from Shelburne to Granville. Travel from Wycombe to Buckingham, from the first Lord Lansdowne, the most accomplished minister this country ever produced, to the last of our classic statesmen. Even the sovereign genius of Chatham was nursed in the groves of Stowe and the *templa quam dilecta* of Cobham, and it was beneath his oaks at Beaconsfield that Mr. Burke poured forth those divine effusions that vindicated the social system and reconciled the authority of law with the liberty of men. And in our time, faithful to its character and its mission, amid a great parliamentary revolution, Buckingham called a new political class into existence, and enfranchised you and the farmers of England by the Chandos clause."

Mr. Disraeli was returned without opposition, and as long as he sat in the House of Commons the county of Bucks was ever loyal to him. He never had occasion to represent any other constituency.

He was no silent member. Upon all the leading measures advocated by the govern-

ment, the voice of Mr. Disraeli was heard. He sympathized with the half-ruined owners of sugar plantations in our West India islands, and opposed the proposal that sugars, which were the produce of slave labour, and sugars the produce of free labour, should be admitted into the home market on a footing of perfect equality. "Having deprived our colonies," he said, "of those successful means of general competition, it would seem that the metropolis was at least bound to secure them a home market. If the consequence of such a monopoly were a dear article, the increased price must be considered as an amercement for the luxury of a philanthropy not sufficiently informed of the complicated circumstances with which it had to deal. . . . The movement of the middle classes for the abolition of slavery was virtuous, but it was not wise. It was an ignorant movement. It showed a want of knowledge both of the laws of commerce and the stipulations of treaties; and it has alike ruined the colonies and aggravated the slave trade. . . . The plea of the free-traders for the admission of slave-grown sugar, on the ground of inconsistency in excluding it since we admitted other products of slave-grown labour, can be characterized only by an epithet too harsh for polite composition when we recollect that, when the whole community shrunk from the abomination of consuming the slave-grown sugar of our own colonies, they had then for years, nay, in some instances almost for centuries, been in the habit of drinking slave-grown coffee, smoking slave-grown tobacco, and spinning slave-grown cotton. They therefore took their resolution with a full knowledge of these inconsistent accessories. The history of the abolition of slavery by the English and its consequences would be a narrative of ignorance, injustice, blundering, waste, and havoc, not easily paralleled in the history of mankind."

He also warmly supported the measure of Lord George Bentinck for intersecting Ireland with railways, the expense of constructing which was to be shared between

private companies and the government. By this means a handsome dividend would be returned to shareholders, whilst ample work would be found for the idle and destitute Irish. The proposal was, however, opposed by the government, though they so far expressed their approval of its principle by borrowing some of the details of the scheme a few months afterwards. When a period of severe commercial distress had set in, and the government were at their wit's end, hesitating whether to suspend the Bank Charter Act or not, Mr. Disraeli explained that the state of the country was nothing less than the logical result of free trade, which, as then conducted, had caused a perpetual outflow of gold in order to purchase corn and other goods which foreign nations declined to sell or barter. In a careful speech he reviewed the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, and argued that the power of England, if exercised in a proper and judicious manner, was an influence that no foreign nation could ignore. "England," he said, alluding to the alleged influence of France in Spain, and Russia in Germany, "England held the balance, and if she was conscious of her position, and exerted her influence with firmness and discretion, she might obtain and enjoy the blessings of peace, and hand them down to posterity." These remarks he made especially to apply to the Spanish marriages and the extinction of the free state of Cracow by Russia, in direct violation of the treaty of Vienna.

A question now came before the House which, since it appealed very closely to the toleration which was one of the chief features of Mr. Disraeli's political creed and to those sympathies with his race which he had never hesitated to express, is deserving of fuller treatment. At the recent general election the citizens of London had thought fit to return as one of their representatives Baron Rothschild, a Hebrew merchant of great wealth and high standing in the city; and Lord John Russell, also one of the members of the

metropolis, had pledged himself to procure admission for his new colleague into the House of Commons. As the law then stood, the doors of parliament were closed to all who refused to declare their acceptance of the clauses contained in the oath necessary for admission "on the true faith of a Christian." This reservation naturally excluded all Jews from entertaining the hope of parliamentary honours, and though the matter had often been discussed by the House, the feeling of the majority was against the expelling clause being rescinded. The question now arose whether Baron Rothschild should be admitted without being compelled to subscribe to this form of oath. An important debate was expected which would call forth all the passions and prejudices of men, and the result of the controversy was looked for with no little interest, and on the part of the more conservative of the population, with some trepidation. Of late years religious toleration had made advances; the Roman Catholic had been emancipated, and the Test and Corporation Acts had been repealed. But the Papist, however superstitious, and the Dissenter, however narrow-minded, were both Christians; thus there was nothing inconsistent in permitting them to have a part in the legislation of a Christian country.

To admit the Jew was, however, to assert the principle that there was no necessary connection between politics and Christianity, and that the English constitution was based on religious equality. Yet the existence of a church by law established plainly contradicts this principle of equality. By the Act of Settlement it has been laid down that the sovereign of these realms must be one in communion with the Church of England. Archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, and the ministers of no other religious organization, constitute an essential element in the composition of the House of Lords. Clergymen of the Church of England, and they alone, are ineligible for the House of Commons, whilst ministers

of other bodies can be freely elected. Again, every citizen who does not profess a creed is legally supposed to be a member of the Established Church, while no such presumption is ever raised in favour of any other religious community. We must also remember that we are dealing with a time when the Divorce Court was not established, when church rates were levied, when the Irish Church was still in existence, when the Universities Tests Acts had not been repealed, when in fact the Established Church of England was the sacred ark on which no man should lay hands profanely. The admission of the Jew into the legislature touched therefore the very quick of our religious belief. At one time it had been necessary for a member of parliament to be a follower of the teaching of the Church of England; then the principle of toleration had been extended to admit the Roman Catholic and the Dissenter; and now it was argued that toleration should dissolve itself into a religious equality contrary to the principles of the English constitution, and that men who denied the very foundation stone upon which the Christian church was erected were to be suffered to make the laws of a Christian people. It is therefore not surprising that the measure of Lord John Russell gave rise to considerable opposition. It was asked where would the legislature draw the line as to toleration? The Church of England had been dethroned from her proud pre-eminence; Roman Catholics had entered the House of Commons; Dissenters had followed them; Jews were now to be admitted; what was to prevent the doors being opened—a question by the way now being freely discussed—to atheists and free thinkers? Mr. Gladstone had written a book to prove the necessity of the union between church and state; the church was to be the Church of England, and the state was to be guided and protected by her teaching. His book had a wide circulation amongst Conservatives, and its principles were cordially approved of.

Upon the question of the admission of the Jews, Mr. Disraeli differed from the majority of the party that his genius and statesmanship had organized. He held that it was unjust to exclude from the honours of British legislation men who were born British subjects, who were few in number, whose loyalty had never been impeached, and who believed in the faith upon which Christianity had been founded. He maintained that mankind was under deep obligations to the Jews, and therefore ought, in common gratitude, to render them every privilege. "The Saxon, the Slav, and the Celt," he writes, in the memorable chapter upon his race in his biography of Lord George Bentinck, "have adopted most of the laws and many of the customs of these Arabian tribes, all their literature and all their religion. They are therefore indebted to them for much that regulates, much that charms, and much that solaces existence. The toiling multitude rest every seventh day by virtue of a Jewish law; they are perpetually reading, 'for their example,' the records of Jewish history, and singing the odes and elegies of Jewish poets; and they daily acknowledge on their knees, with reverent gratitude, that the only medium of communication between the Creator and themselves is the Jewish race. Yet they treat that race as the vilest of generations; and instead of logically looking upon them as the human family that has contributed most to human happiness, they extend to them every term of obloquy and every form of persecution." He denied, too, the truth of the common accusation that the dispersion of the Hebrew race was a penalty incurred for the crucifixion of our Redeemer by the Romans at Jerusalem, and at the instigation of some Jews in the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Such a charge, he argued, was neither historically true nor dogmatically sound. It was not historically true, because the Jewish race at the time of the advent of our Lord was as much dispersed throughout the world as at the present time, and had been so for many centuries.

Consequently, the bulk of the Hebrew nation had no share in the act of the crucifixion. Nor was it historically true that the small section of the Jewish race which dwelt in Palestine rejected the Christ. The reverse was the truth. "Had it," writes Mr. Disraeli, "not been for the Jews of Palestine the good tidings of our Lord would have been unknown for ever to the northern and western races. The first preachers of the gospel were Jews, and none else. No one has ever been permitted to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit except a Jew. For nearly a century no one believed in the good tidings except Jews. They nursed the sacred flame of which they were the consecrated and hereditary depositories. And when the time was ripe to diffuse the truth among the ethnicks, it was not a senator of Rome or a philosopher of Athens who was personally appointed by our Lord for that office, but a Jew of Tarsus, who founded the seven churches of Asia. And that greater church, great even amid its terrible corruptions, that has avenged the victory of Titus by subjugating the capital of the Cæsars, and has changed every one of the Olympian temples into altars of the God of Sinai and of Calvary, was founded by another Jew, a Jew of Galilee."

Thus the dispersion of the Jews, preceding as it did for ages the coming of our Saviour, could not, argues our author, be on account of behaviour which occurred after the advent. Nor were the Jews, he says, guilty of that subsequent conduct which has been imputed to them as a crime, since for Him and His blessed name they preached and wrote and shed their blood as "witnesses." And precisely as the charges against Israel were not historically correct, so were they neither dogmatically sound. There is no passage in Holy Writ, contends Mr. Disraeli, which in the slightest degree warrants the penal assumption. The imprecation of the mob at the crucifixion has been sometimes strangely quoted as a divine decree. But is it a principle of jurisprudence, human

or inspired, to permit criminals to ordain their own punishment? Why, too, should they transfer any portion of the infliction to their posterity? What evidence have we that the wild suggestion was sanctioned by Omnipotence? On the contrary, amid the expiating agony, a divine voice at the same time solicited a secured forgiveness. And if unforgiven, could the cry of a rabble, inquires Mr. Disraeli, at such a scene bind a nation? Then he proceeds to put the question which Christian philosophy can only answer by referring it to the faith which will one day solve the inexplicable, and render sound the apparently illogical. "If the Jews," writes Mr. Disraeli, "had not prevailed upon the Romans to crucify our Lord, what would have become of the Atonement? But the human mind cannot contemplate the idea that the most important deed of time could depend upon human will. The immolators were pre-ordained like the victim, and the holy race supplied both. Could that be a crime which secured for all mankind eternal joy—which vanquished Satan, and opened the gates of Paradise? Such a tenet would sully and impugn the doctrine that is the corner-stone of our faith and hope. Men must not presume to sit in judgment on such an act. They must bow their heads in awe and astonishment and trembling gratitude."

Having argued that our Christianity is only the completion of Judaism, that it is to Jews that we owe the preservation of the sacred writings, and, above all, that it is to a Jew we are indebted for the hope of eternal salvation, Mr. Disraeli further discusses our indebtedness to the Hebrew race. Were it not, he says, for music, it might be thought that the Beautiful was dead. And who, pray, he asks, are the great composers whose works rank with the transcendent creations of human genius? "They are the descendants of those Arabian tribes who conquered Canaan, and who by favour of the Most High have done more with less means even than the Athenians." In art,

in science, in philosophy, the Jews have equally excelled. They are the trustees of tradition and the conservators of the religious element. They are a living and the most striking evidence of the falsity of that pernicious doctrine of modern times, the natural equality of man. All the tendencies of the Hebrew race, says Mr. Disraeli, are conservative. Their bias is to religion, property, and natural aristocracy. It should, therefore, be the interest of statesmen that this bias of a great race should be encouraged, and their energies and creative powers enlisted in the cause of existing society. In conclusion, the writer warns us, that nations have prospered or fallen according to their treatment of the Hebrew race. "It may be observed," he writes, "that the decline and disasters of modern communities have generally been relative to their degree of sedition against the Semitic principle. Since the great revolt of the Celts against the first and second testament, at the close of the last century, France has been alternately in a state of collapse or convulsion. Throughout the awful trials of the last sixty years, England, notwithstanding her deficient and meagre theology, has always remembered Sion. The great transatlantic republic is intensely Semitic, and has prospered accordingly. This sacred principle alone has consolidated the mighty empire of all the Russias. How omnipotent it is cannot be more clearly shown than by the instance of Rome, where it appears in its most corrupt form. An old man on a Semitic throne baffles the modern Attilas and the recent invasion of the barbarians, under the form of red republicans, socialists, communists—all different phases which describe the relapse of the once converted races into their primitive condition of savagery. Austria would long ago have dissolved but for the Semitic principle, and if the north of Germany has never succeeded in attaining that imperial position which seemed its natural destiny, it is that the north of Germany has never at any time been thoroughly converted.

Some perhaps may point to Spain as a remarkable instance of decline in a country where the Semitic principle has exercised great influence. But the fall of Spain was occasioned by the expulsion of her Semitic population: a million families of Jews and Saracens, the most distinguished of her citizens for their industry and their intelligence, their learning and their wealth."

In whatever light we regard these opinions—whether we look upon them as proceeding from the distorted enthusiasm of one who was deeply attached to a race which has a splendid past, which has a persecuted present, and which is to have a glorious future; whether we consider the comparison between Judaism and Christianity as strained and false, and deny that Christianity is the completion of Judaism; whether we respect or sneer at "the Semitic principle," or whatever be the judgment we form upon the subject—certain it is that to Mr. Disraeli these views constituted the creed of his life. Sprung from a people whom he considered the "aristocracy of nature," he was essentially an aristocrat in the social and political opinions he held. He denied the theory as to the equality of man; he was a firm believer in "race;" he upheld the existence of a privileged class; in all his instincts he was, what he claims as the characteristic of his nation, conservative—the conservatism of one proud of his lineage, the conservatism of a cultured, tolerant man of the world. The jealous and the spiteful who saw Mr. Disraeli living in the society of the great, and for years representing the landed gentry of England, sneered at the son of the Hebrew man of letters for occupying a position he had no right to hold, and branded him with opprobrious epithets for his arrogance.

Yet, in the light Mr. Disraeli regarded himself, there was no presumption. In this country, which holds in such high estimation ancient race, the lineage of the member for Buckinghamshire could trace back further in the past than could the birth of any by whom

he was surrounded; therefore, in his eyes the social atmosphere of the high-born was the element it was quite his due to breathe. He came of a superior race. The very manner, he declared, in which the Hebrew had baffled the persecutions of the past proved his superiority, since he is the only one of pure race in existence who has outlived persecution; and it was but right, according to the laws of ethnology, for him to take his place amongst those who lead. Throughout his whole political career, we never find Mr. Disraeli apologizing for the lofty position he held, or saying, as meaner natures would, servile things to tickle the vanity of those who, though they followed him, yet in all probability considered themselves his social superiors. Addington, "the doctor," was very urbane and deferential to the great, as if aware of his social shortcomings; Canning had a strong leaven of toadyism in his nature; but the worst enemy of Mr. Disraeli never accused him of base flatteries, or the want of a noble self-respect. All the honours conferred on him appeared only as the ordinary result of cause and effect, as the tribute due to the really superior man. He led the Protectionists, he led the Tories, he led the nation, at one time he almost led Europe; he was a commoner, he became a peer; his coat of arms was a blank, yet on his breast glittered the star of a knight of the garter. Still throughout he was never fustily elated as to his position: his was an instance of the man who feels himself great because he knows he is worthy to be great. And apart from his genius, apart from his industry, he was conscious that he deserved this greatness, because he came from a line that had given to both sacred and secular history its most distinguished men—because in his veins there was the same blood as flowed in Him "who is the eternal glory of the Jewish race." There was no future too splendid he considered for one of the chosen people. When Canning made a brilliant marriage, Pitt, highly pleased, said it would

give his friend position. What the connection with the house of Portland was to George Canning, the connection with the house of David was to Benjamin Disraeli—it gave him, in his own estimation, "position."

When, therefore, in the December of 1847, Lord John Russell brought before the House of Commons his resolution to remove the disabilities of the Jews, Mr. Disraeli came boldly forward to support the measure. He expressed on this occasion very much the same opinions as he had maintained in his memoir of Lord George Bentinck, and in his novel of "Tancred." He declared that it was the duty of Christians to accord full civil rights to the Jews, since there was such an affinity between Judaism and Christianity. "For where," he asked, "is your Christianity if you do not believe in their Judaism?" There was no hostility, he said, on the part of the Jew to the Christian church, for he alone of all religious people did not proselytize. Why, then, should the Christian church be hostile to the Jew? By her teaching she had made the history of the Jews the most celebrated history in the world. On every sacred day she read to the people the exploits of Jewish heroes, the proofs of Jewish devotion, and she obeyed as the rule of her life the commandments given to the Jews. When she wished to express feelings of praise and thanksgiving, or to find expressions of solace in grief, she met with both in the works of the Jewish poets. "If you had not forgotten," he said, "what you owe to this people—if you were grateful for that literature which for thousands of years has brought so much instruction and so much consolation to the sons of men—you as Christians would be only too ready to seize the first opportunity of meeting the claims of those who profess this religion." It was entirely, he avowed, on religious grounds and on religious principles that he ventured to recommend this subject to the notice of the House. It was a question on which men, whatever might be the consequences, must speak what they

felt. It was not, he concluded, because he was of Hebrew origin, but because he was a Christian, that he would not take upon himself the responsibility "of excluding from the legislature those who were of the religion in the bosom of which his Lord and Saviour was born." Lord George Bentinck also spoke in favour of the resolution; but in spite of the advocacy of the two leaders of the Protectionists, the measure was not, as we know, then satisfactorily settled. Lord John Russell carried the second reading by a large majority; but when the Lords came to consider the clauses, the bill was thrown out. Subsequently Lord John made an attempt to bring Baron Rothschild into parliament by a mere vote of the House of Commons; but Mr. Disraeli, though his sympathies were strongly in favour of the movement, and though he was a friend of the baron, declined to support so unconstitutional a proceeding.

One important result, favourable to the rising fortunes of Mr. Disraeli, however, followed the debate on this subject. The country was not then ripe for the question of Jewish emancipation; and the Protectionists being principally composed of English country gentlemen, with the usual prejudices of their order against foreign intrusion, did not see why the constitution should be upset in order that a wealthy Hebrew merchant might have the honour of representing London. It was bad enough to admit a Roman Catholic, who divided his allegiance between the queen and the pope, and a Dissenter who made war upon the church to vent his radical jealousy; but to have the House swarming with Jew usurers and money-lenders, though within their veins they might have the blood of all the prophets and apostles to boot, was an extension of the principles of toleration not to be sanctioned for one moment. It was known that Lord George Bentinck, who was ever in favour of religious freedom, was about to vote for the resolution of Lord John Russell; and en-

deavours were made to turn him from his purpose, but in vain. Consequently murmurs and divisions arose amongst the Protectionists at the course their leader had pursued; and Lord George being a man of imperious nature, and then somewhat irritable from ill health, resigned the chieftainship of the Protectionists, leaving the conduct of affairs entirely in the hands of his able lieutenant. He was implored to reconsider his determination, "as one very detrimental to the cause to which he was devoted, and which would probably tend to the triumph of those whose policy he had attempted to defeat, and whose personal conduct he had at least succeeded in punishing." He replied that he would feel greatly relieved by a restoration to privacy and freedom, as he seriously doubted whether he was able to work on much longer. This answer was sufficient to prevent his followers from repeating their request. On being presented with an address signed by the Protectionists, he thus expressed himself:—

"The considerations which obliged me to surrender a post of honour which every independent and high-minded English gentleman has at all times prized above the highest rewards in the gift of the crown, 'the leadership of the country gentlemen of England,' will never influence me to swerve from any endeavours of which my poor abilities and bodily energies are capable in the promotion of the prosperity of all classes in the British empire at home and in the colonies, any more than they can ever make me forget the attachment, the friendship, and the enthusiastic support, of those who stood by me to the end of the death struggle for British interests and for English good faith and political honour, and to whose continued friendship and constancy I know I am indebted for this graceful and grateful compliment."

He was not, however, permitted long to devote his services to the state. A few months after his resignation he was found dead on the road, near Thoresby, the

seat of Lord Manvers, to which place he had walked over from Welbeck. He died of sheer exhaustion, a martyr to his love of doing thoroughly whatever he put his hand to. It is said that he often worked eighteen out of the four-and-twenty hours, mastering the details of blue-books, and taking no sustenance beyond a little tea and dry toast. "The labours of Lord George Bentinck," writes Mr. Disraeli, "had been supernatural, and one ought, perhaps, to have felt that it was impossible they could be continued on such a scale of exhaustion; but no friend could control his eager life in this respect; he obeyed the law of his vehement and fiery nature, being one of those men who, in whatever they undertake, know no medium, but will 'succeed or die.'"

It had been the wish of Mr. Disraeli, since he, too, had been guilty of the crime of voting for the removal of Jewish disabilities, to have followed the example of Lord George Bentinck, and to have abdicated the post he held with relation to the Protectionists. However, at the earnest request of Lord George, who said that such a proceeding would be indicative of schism, which it was most necessary to discourage, he abandoned the idea, and faced the treasury bench as the actual, though at that time not the recognized leader of the secessionists. As a critical member of the Opposition, and now the chief, however unwilling might be his followers, of a great party, he was soon to prove to the mixed band of Whigs and Peelites that he fully understood the responsibilities of his office, and that he was no blind or tame opponent of injudicious measures.* Parliament had reassembled,

* I am quite aware that in the interval between the resignation of Lord George Bentinck and the year 1849, Mr. Disraeli was not the recognized leader in the House of Commons. There were several Richards in the field. Mr. Disraeli's own words, in the memoir of Lord George Bentinck, are, "The session, however, was to commence without a leader, without any recognized organ of communication between parties, or any responsible representative of opinion in debate. All again was chaos. There is, however, something so vital in the conservative party that it seems always to rally under every disadvantage." Still the various rivals for the post of leader of the Protectionists were, in comparison with Mr. Disraeli, only dummies. The government treated Mr. Disraeli as if he were the virtual leader, and between Lord Derby and the member for

February 23, 1848, and shortly after the meeting of the Houses, Lord John Russell rose up to propose an increase in that convenient but hated impost the income-tax, offering as his excuse for the augmentation, that owing to the ambitious designs of the princes of the house of Orleans, it had become necessary to enlarge our armaments. The leader of the Protectionists keenly criticised the proposal. He reminded the House that when, in 1842, the country had submitted to the imposition of the income tax, the Whigs had warmly denounced it as unprecedented, nay, even as unconstitutional; that when Sir Robert Peel had introduced the measure, he represented himself as being in communication with foreign powers for the establishment between them and Great Britain of treaties of reciprocity; and that the income tax was levied with the express purpose of carrying on the affairs of the country until those treaties should have been ratified. "Sir," he cried, "in all this the right honourable gentleman acted as great ministers had acted before him. He acted exactly as Mr. Pitt did in 1787; he followed entirely the example of Mr. Pitt, who pursued the principle of other great men who had preceded him—Lord Shel-

Buckinghamshire there existed the most complete confidence. For a time there was a kind of triumvirate leadership—Lord Granby, Mr. Herries, and Mr. Disraeli—of the Protectionists in the lower house, but it was through-out apparent that Mr. Disraeli was the actual leader. A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* thus describes the situation of affairs:—"Mr. Disraeli's position towards the party itself, unanimous as it professed to be in its fealty to Lord Derby, was such as only a man of imperturbable temper and great forethought could have endured. He was their spokesman and chief adviser on almost all occasions; he made no open pretence to guide their policy. He never sought, far less intrigued for, the leadership of the party. The party learned ere long that it could not do without him, and events took their natural course. The leadership, after a few abortive gyrations, fell, so to speak, of its own accord, into his hands, and in spite of more than one ill-arranged and worse-executed attempt to transfer it to another, it has continued with him up to the present hour." From Hansard it does not appear that Mr. Disraeli was regarded by the Whigs as the real leader of the Protectionists until the July of 1849. In the debates that then ensued he is called for the first time the leader. Mr. Roebuck congratulates him "upon this his first appearance as the acknowledged chief of the party." The chancellor of the exchequer speaks of the hon. gentleman as "the avowed leader of a powerful party;" whilst Lord John Russell refers to the Protectionists as "the supporters" of Mr. Disraeli.

burne and Lord Bolingbroke. And thus the right honourable gentleman, when he proposed his commercial change in 1842, announced at the same time that he was bringing all the influence of his justly powerful name, and of his singularly powerful government, to bear on foreign courts, in order to obtain a reciprocal commercial intercourse between this and other countries. Sir, I gave to the right honourable gentleman, at that time, a humble but a sincere and hearty support. I never shall regret it. But it is very necessary that we should recollect, that a great deal had happened in the interval between 1842 and 1845. During that period a great commercial confederation had arisen, very completely organized, and conducted by very able men. They made great way in the country, and they promulgated opinions on commerce very different from those propounded by the late minister in 1842. They were not the opinions of Mr. Pitt, of Lord Shelburne, or of Lord Bolingbroke; they were not the opinions of free-trade, which I am prepared to support. Yes; I am a free-trader, but not a freebooter: honourable gentlemen opposite are freebooters." His opposition was so far effectual that Lord John wisely contented himself with renewing the tax on the same scale at which he had received it from Sir Robert Peel.

The next occasion during this session when the member for Bucks took part in an important debate, was on the motion of Mr. Hume, June 20, 1848. The motion ran thus:—"That this House, as at present constituted, does not fairly represent the population, the property, or the industry of the country, whence has arisen a great and increasing discontent in the minds of a large portion of the people; and it is therefore expedient, with a view to amend the national representation, that the elective franchise shall be so extended as to include all householders; that votes shall be taken by ballot; that the duration of parliament shall not exceed three years; and that the

apportionment of members to population shall be made equal." Mr. Henry Drummond and Lord John Russell had spoken against the motion—Mr. Fox, the member for Oldham, in its favour—when Mr. Disraeli rose. His speech is the first of a series on the question of national representation, and foreshadows the principles he advocated when he introduced his celebrated measure in 1867. Throughout on the question of parliamentary reform, Mr. Disraeli was consistent—the consistency of a far-seeing man who has deeply studied the subject, and knows the line that should be taken. He never regarded the Reform Bill of 1832 as a final measure; and in the various speeches we shall hear him make on the subject between the years 1848 and 1867, we find him ever asserting that the clauses in the bill of 1832 are incomplete, and that it is inevitable that they must be brought again before the House for further and more extended revision. Not once does he ever let fall an expression which can be construed into hostility to electoral change. Give heed to him, for instance, on this occasion, and mark how unreservedly he expresses himself in the matter.

"It is not for us, sir," he said, rising to oppose the motion of Mr. Hume, and to refute its false arguments, "either to defend or attack the Reform Act. We obey it. When it was first brought forward, it encountered the criticism of those who were opposed to His Majesty's ministers in 1832. Perhaps it benefited in some degree by that opposition. But when it had passed—when it became the law of the country—it received from us that allegiance which the law in this country always commands; and no doubt the remedial and practical sense of this country has prevented some of those evils which were then anticipated. . . . *I do not say that it is not necessary to have reform. I will enter fairly into that question, but do not let us enter upon this great question under false pretences. . . . I am not now denying that a change may be necessary:*

that point I am perfectly prepared to enter into. . . . I ventured to say before, that gentlemen around me are not responsible for the Reform Bill. But the Reform Bill was a reconstruction of the order of the Commons—of our estate of the realm. It was a settlement most unsatisfactory to us—we offered our objections to it, and got pelted for our pains. But no one can pretend that settlement was not carried with the full support and sanction of the people of England; and if the question of its passing had been submitted to universal suffrage, there is not the slightest doubt that at the moment all would have registered their votes for the bill. No other plan was desired or tolerated. It was to be something neither more nor less. What you wanted was not only the bill, but the whole bill, and nothing but the bill—and you got it. You were told at the time that the first critics of the Reform Bill would be the reformers themselves; and no prophecy ever was more strikingly fulfilled. But when there has been a settlement of the great question—concluded, too, under such circumstances—the country agitated for two years—yourselves choosing the hour of action—when you had every possible advantage—when opposition, legitimate, constitutional, and I believe national opposition, was entirely overcome by the energy and artifices of your triumphant faction—when you yourselves laid it down as a great apophthegm that became a household word, that you would have it and nothing else—it is not unreasonable that we, who agreed to it with reluctance, or that the Whig party, the government of the day, who brought it forward after mature consideration, should say before we disturb the settlement then made—‘Let us be sure that we are arriving at a new reconstruction that offers a fair prospect of giving satisfaction to the people and security to the state.’

“I speak, not from egotism, for myself on this subject; for one naturally wishes, on such subjects, not to draw any one into responsibility for one’s expression. *I, for*

one, am no advocate for finality. I conceive there may be circumstances—there may be a period when we shall do that which we have done for five hundred years in this country—reconstruct the estate of the Commons. But I contend that the last reconstruction—and it is rather a recent one, however unsatisfactory to the hon. gentleman and his friends—is likely to be more satisfactory to the nation than the plan brought forward by the hon. gentleman: and I am not prepared to support any new plan, any new change, on a subject so important, unless I believe it to be one that will conduce very greatly to the public interest. Certainly I cannot, in the character of the present plan, discover anything that has a tendency to satisfy the public heart; because you must divest this question of all that rhetorical varnish and that powerful sentiment with which it has been suffused by the hon. member for Oldham. This is not at all a project to enfranchise the serfs of England—this is not at all a project that tells the labouring classes they shall take their place in the political constitution of the country. It is characterized by features totally opposed to the principles laid down by the hon. member for Oldham. *If there be any mistake more striking than another in the settlement of 1832—and, in this respect, I differ from the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Locke King)—it is, in my opinion, that the bill of 1832 took the qualification of property in too hard and rigid a sense, as the only qualification which should exist in this country for the exercise of political rights.* How does the hon. member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), the great champion of the new movement, meet this difficulty? He has brought forward a project of which property, and property alone, is the basis: he has not come forward with any scheme for an educational suffrage or an industrial suffrage—he has not attempted in any way to increase or vary the elements of suffrage. It is impossible that any plan can be more hard, more commonplace, more literal, more unsatisfactory, or more offensive, as the

speech of the hon. member for Oldham shows it must be, to the great body of the working classes, than one which recognizes property, and property alone, as its basis.

"Now, sir, for one, I think property is sufficiently represented in this House. *I am prepared to support the system of 1832 until I see that the circumstances and necessities of the country require a change; but I am convinced that when that change comes, it will be one that will have more regard for other sentiments, qualities, and conditions, than the mere possession of property as a qualification for the exercise of the political franchise.* And, therefore, in opposing the measure of the hon. member for Montrose, *I protest against being placed in the category of finality, or as one who believes that no change is ever to take place in that wherein there has been, throughout the history of this ancient country, frequent and continuous change—the construction of this estate of the realm.* I oppose this new scheme, because it does not appear to be adapted in any way to satisfy the wants of the age, or to be conceived in the spirit of the times."

The speaker then laid bare the sophistries which ran through the arguments of Mr. Fox, and proved how inadequate were the means proposed by Mr. Hume to amend the national representation. He stated that the principal plea for parliamentary reconstruction and political revolution had always been the increase in the expenditure and in the taxation of the country; but now he showed that a little prior to the passing of the Reform Bill, in the year 1828, the revenue raised in the country from ordinary sources was £49,500,000, whilst the revenue raised in 1848 was £47,500,000. Again it was calculated that in 1828 the people of England were taxed something like two guineas a head, whilst in 1848 they were taxed a little over 30s. How, then, could the Radical party maintain their argument that taxation in this country had oppressively increased, and therefore that such a state of things necessitated a change in our parliamentary constitution? He denied the

premise of Mr. Hume that every Englishman had a right to vote. If every Englishman had a right to vote, why was it necessary that he should have a qualification for that vote—why that qualification should be the circumstance of living in a house? The suffrage was neither a trust nor a right, but, as he had always contended, a privilege. And that brought him to his favourite subject, the real character of the House of Commons, and the political order of which its members were the representatives. "We represent the Commons," he said; "the Commons are an estate of the realm. The materials of that estate constitute, of course, a question of policy—of expediency—and it is perfectly open to anybody, at any time, to discuss the question of what that order should consist. It is an order, whether you make it consist of thousands, of hundreds of thousands, or even of two or three millions—it becomes an order and a privileged order; and for the hon. gentleman to pretend that he is settling a great question for ever, by proposing that every man who lives in a house should have a vote is an absurdity, because the very supporter of the motion, on his own side, who has made an eloquent speech in favour of it, has argued throughout that there should be no limitation whatever assigned to the exercise of the suffrage."

With regard to the ballot, he was neither opposed to it nor in favour of it. He simply now saw no necessity for it. It was all folly and nonsense to say that the present age and the present parliament were distinguished by their corrupt practices. The very reverse was the case. All parliaments for the last fifty years had been less and less corrupt. The fact was that parliament was becoming purer and more pure every day—a state of things inevitable in a land of progress like England, where, with a free press and healthy action of public opinion, the undue influence of gold and property must every year, and in each successive parliament, be diminished. The

question of triennial parliaments, he continued, was one upon which he was the less inclined to say anything, since it formed part of those old Tory principles which he had always taken every opportunity of promulgating. Triennial parliaments were a portion of that old Tory creed around which, he was happy to observe more than one indication, the people of this country were well inclined to rally. The only objection to the change was that it *was* a change, and in the present position of affairs all unnecessary changes of this kind were to be deprecated. In conclusion, he opposed all the articles in the motion. They were the result of a mischievous agitation, and of mischievous agitators. They were advocated for the unblushing purpose of securing a middle-class government, instead of an English and a national government. If political changes were necessary, let them be introduced by the proper leaders of the people—the gentlemen of England. The Manchester school were always attacking traditionary influences, and intimating that it was their wish to subdivide large properties. Foreseeing, as he did, what the results would be, and convinced that, without traditional influences and large properties, they would find it impossible to govern England, he preferred the liberty they now enjoyed to the liberalism promised by Mr. Hume, and found in the rights of Englishmen something better than the rights of men.

Foreign affairs were now to attract his attention. The year 1848 was a terrible one to all foreign secretaries. Scarcely a state in Europe escaped the dire contagion of revolution. In France Louis Philippe had been forced to fly the country, and a republic had taken the place of a monarchy; Austria was in revolt, and Prince Metternich had been compelled to take shelter in voluntary exile; Berlin was in the hands of the revolutionists; the Italians were up in arms against the hated Austrians; Schleswig and Holstein were at daggers drawn; riots had broken out in Naples owing to the

despotic rule of the weak yet cruel Bomba; Rome was in similar difficulties, and his Holiness had to quit the city in disguise; the Magyars were doing their best to rend the Austrian empire in twain; in the Iberian peninsula Portugal was a prey to internal dissension, whilst Narvaez had dethroned constitutional government in Spain, and in its stead had established a "monstrous despotism;" even quiet humdrum Bavaria did not escape, and the Lola Montes affair caused its amorous king to bow to the verdict of an indignant people, and abdicate his throne.

Lord Palmerston was a vigilant and patriotic foreign minister; but his indiscreet admiration of English institutions caused us then no little trouble and humiliation. "He looks upon the English constitution," said Mr. Disraeli, "as a model farm, and forces it upon every country." When the movement of Narvaez became known to the government, Lord Palmerston thought it his duty, since England had endeavoured to maintain a constitutional monarchy within the Spanish dominions, to act the part of counsellor and friend to the administration at Madrid. He accordingly instructed Sir Henry Bulwer, our minister, to recommend to the Spanish government a line of conduct more in accordance with constitutional usages. "The recent fall of the king of the French," wrote Lord Palmerston, "and of his whole family, and the expulsion of his ministers, ought to teach the Spanish court and government how great is the danger of an attempt to govern a country in a manner at variance with the feelings and opinions of the nation; and the catastrophe which has happened in France must serve to show that even a large and well-disciplined army becomes an ineffectual defence of the crown, when the course pursued by the crown is at variance with the general sentiments of the country." Sir Henry was therefore instructed to suggest to the Spanish government that its basis should be enlarged, by calling to its councils "some of those men

who possess the confidence of the liberal party;" and then came the threat that unless Spain followed our counsels, our countenance would be withdrawn from her. Narvaez was not the meekest and most amiable of men, and against this interference with the internal affairs of his country he vigorously protested. He had abolished constitutionalism, and it was a matter of utter indifference to him whether he possessed "the confidence of the Liberal party" or the contrary. Accordingly the English ambassador was insulted. He was accused of having furthered the insurrection, of having employed English ships to run round the Spanish coast in order to excite revolt, and of having corrupted the Spanish troops by presents of English gold. He was dismissed the capital under the frivolous pretext that his life was in danger. Such behaviour was of course a direct insult to England; and in justice to Lord Palmerston, let us remember that he at once proposed prompt and decided measures to the cabinet: the fleet, he said, should be sent immediately to Cadiz to demand satisfaction.

"We had but to send a fleet to Cadiz," writes Sir Henry Bulwer, "and hold up our little finger, and Narvaez and his second would have fallen down like a pack of cards. The queen-mother, who trembled for a large portion of her property engaged in speculations in Cuba, would have been the first to desert him; the army, not a regiment of which he could rely upon, would have shouted *vivas* to his successor. There is no satisfaction we could have demanded that would not have been gratefully given and prodigally offered." Unfortunately the counsels of our foreign secretary did not prevail. His colleagues declined to support him, and refused to have recourse to extreme measures. Some were delighted at the policy of Lord Palmerston receiving a snub; others belonged to that school which looks upon national honour as a shadow always to be sacrificed to the substance of immediate interest; whilst a few, frightened at the wild doctrines

then beginning to threaten society in France, thought that a military despotism was a form of government to be encouraged, and that Narvaez was the right man in the right place. The insult was therefore thought to be sufficiently avenged by the dismissal of the Spanish minister at the court of St. James's, and the rupture of diplomatic relations between the two countries. "Never," writes Sir Henry Bulwer, "was extreme caution the parent of more desperate consequences. But for these consequences Lord Palmerston was not responsible. Had his advice been followed, it is more than probable that Queen Isabella would still have been on the throne in Madrid; that a constitutional government would have been long since established firmly in France; and that the campaign of the Crimea would have been avoided."

It was not to be expected that such a humiliation would be ignored by the House of Commons. A resolution was accordingly moved by Mr. Bankes (June 5, 1848), "That this House learns with deep regret, from a correspondence between the British government and the government of Spain, that a proposed interference with the internal concerns of the Spanish government, as conducted under the authority and with the entire approval of Her Majesty's ministers, has placed the British government and our representative at the court of Madrid in a position humiliating in its character, and calculated to affect the friendly relations heretofore existing between the courts of Great Britain and Spain." A warm debate ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took a prominent part. It has been the wise rule of our foreign office never to meddle in continental complications by any active measures, unless English interests are likely to be endangered by the absence of such interference. The vigilance and patriotism of Lord Palmerston were above suspicion; but during the earlier part of his career, when he held the seals as foreign secretary, he was too apt to use the influence of his office in settling questions which might be

of vital importance to other countries, but which had no direct bearing upon the power or position of England. Mr. Disraeli took a different view of our foreign policy. He held, and as Lord Beaconsfield he practised what he taught, that England was a country not only to be respected, but to be feared; that when she had pledged her word, either by treaty or convention, to carry out what she had promised, no selfish interests should stay her proceedings, and that with the advantages of her position, the strength of her fleet, and the bravery of her men, she was a power, if rightly directed, that none dare despise. He also maintained that though by our geographical position we were happily severed from many of the dangers that menace continental nations, yet our welfare as a great colonial power was so intimately connected with European politics, that in seasons of crisis we could only retire from interference at the expense not only of our prestige but of our safety. Still such views were utterly opposed to bluster, and a feverish national egotism which obtruded itself at every occasion upon our neighbour's affairs, giving him gratuitous advice, seeking to guide and control his actions, and, in short, behaving more like the meddlesome spy than the trusty ally. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, condemned the policy of Lord Palmerston, since it not only needlessly interfered with the internal affairs of other countries, but endeavoured to graft English Liberalism upon foreign constitutions. He objected to the course our foreign secretary had pursued in taking the part of the Magyars against Austria, of the Italians against Austria, and of the Sicilians against the king of Naples. These were matters very important to Austria, to Hungary, to Lombardy, to Naples, but they did not concern us; the intrigues of these struggling nationalities failed in any way to touch our interests, and it was an excellent rule both in public and private life to mind one's own business.

Nay, he contended if any result arose from this interference it would be rather

to our detriment, for it was to our advantage that the north of Italy should belong to Austria, and that Sicily should belong to Naples. Then he alluded to the Madrid affair. He spoke highly of the character of Sir Henry Bulwer; he believed that no man had of late years been employed to serve Her Majesty abroad who had done better service to the crown; and he regretted that after such an insult passed upon so eminent a public servant, the government at home should have offered him no substantial reward for his services. With regard to the unhappy state paper, the cause of all this imbroglio, that Lord Palmerston had addressed to the Spanish government, Mr. Disraeli, in his most sarcastic manner, congratulated his lordship upon the tact with which he reminded Spain of her obligations to England, upon the pure Castilian style of his literary composition, upon his sesquipedalian sentences and his grandiose phraseology. He also complimented the Whigs upon their proselytizing spirit in attempting to convert all nations to English Liberalism. They could not find a country governed by an absolute power without telling her that the only way to be happy and prosperous was to have "a House of Lords and a House of Commons, and an English treaty of commerce." By lending the aid of a great country like England to some miserable faction, they had created parties in domestic policy in every country—from Athens to Madrid—they had deteriorated the prosperity and condition of the people, and had laid the seeds of infinite confusion. He then concluded by impressing upon the House that it was their duty to accept the expulsion of Sir Henry Bulwer as a condemnation of the principles of Liberalism in foreign politics, and that they should not allow so distinguished a man to become the scape-goat of a mischievous policy.

This speech was, however, a mere affair of outposts. Mr. Disraeli reserved himself to the end of the session to give battle in downright earnest. On the motion for going into Committee of Supply (August 30,

1848), he reviewed the policy of the government in a speech which was the wittiest and most brilliant that he had delivered since his famous attacks upon Sir Robert Peel. Not a single blunder escaped his critical inspection. He began by denying that there were any grounds for the complaint raised by the cabinet, that the work of the government had been hindered by the flow of unnecessary talk in the House of Commons. It had been alleged that the reason for postponing the annual fish dinner at Greenwich for a week had been occasioned by the "vexatious discussions in the House of Commons"—by that "mania for talk," which had now reached such a pitch "that something must really be done to arrest the evil." He denied these assertions; the only reason why, after sitting ten months, the House had so little to show for its labours, was due, not to the chatter of members—not to the abuse of parliamentary forms—but to the neglect and incapacity of those who sat on the treasury bench. Let them, he said, recall the circumstances under which the present parliament met. At that time thrones had fallen, dynasties had been uprooted, great ministers, whose reputation had become almost part of history, had toppled down, and they at home were suffering from a commercial crisis of almost unprecedented severity. There were uprootings of commercial dynasties in England not less striking than the fall of those political houses of which they had heard so much. When parliament met there was commercial distress of unprecedented severity; private credit was paralyzed; trade was more than dull, it was almost dead; and there scarcely was a private individual in the kingdom who was not smarting under the circumstances of that commercial distress. The Houses had been assembled specially to take into consideration the commercial difficulties of the nation. Yet what had been done in the matter? Absolutely nothing. Certainly they could not be accused of being influ-

enced by "this mania of talk," for there had been no discussion whatever upon the subject of trade depression.

It was true that there had been a desultory debate on the motion of the Address with respect to commercial distress. It was also true that the cabinet had counselled the Bank of England to infringe the law, and that the directors of that body had not availed themselves of this illegal permission. The conduct of the cabinet in this matter was so weak and whimsical that it was difficult to account for it, except by supposing that they were in a state of very great perplexity. Why they should have been so long before they advised the bank to infringe the law—why, when they had done so, they should have been delighted that the bank did not avail itself of the privilege—and why, having done all this, which amounted to nothing, they should have written the following paragraph in the queen's speech, most certainly puzzled him:—"The embarrassments of trade were at one period aggravated by so general a feeling of distrust and alarm, that Her Majesty, for the purpose of restoring confidence, authorized her ministers to recommend to the directors of the Bank of England a course of proceeding suited to such an emergency. This course might have led to an infringement of the law." Why was that paragraph given to the world? If the recommendation of the ministers had been acted upon, he could have understood its insertion in the speech; but the recommendation had not been acted upon, and therefore matters were precisely as they were before: there had been much fuss, and nothing had come of it.

"I scarcely know," said Mr. Disraeli, amid the laughter of the House, "to what to compare the conduct of Her Majesty's ministers, except something that occurs in a delightful city in the south, with which some of the gentlemen of this House are familiar—and which is now, I believe, blockaded or bullied by the

English fleet. There an annual ceremony takes place, when the whole population are found in a state of the greatest alarm and sorrow. A procession moves through the streets, in which the blood of a saint is carried in a consecrated vase. The people throng round the vase, and there is great pressure—as there was in London at the time to which I am alluding. This pressure in time becomes a panic—just as it did in London. It is curious that in both cases the cause is the same: it is a cause of congealed circulation. Just at the moment when unutterable gloom overspreads the population—when nothing but despair and consternation prevail—the chancellor of the exchequer—I beg pardon—the archbishop of Tarento announces the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood—as the chancellor of the exchequer announced the issue of a government letter: in both instances a wholesome state of currency returned: the people resume their gaiety and cheerfulness, the panic and the pressure disappear, everybody returns to music and macaroni, as in London everybody returned to business; and in both cases the remedy is equally efficient and equally a hoax."

Nor had the conduct of the government, continued Mr. Disraeli, been a whit more satisfactory in their treatment of financial questions. Yet it had certainly not been for the lack of introducing financial measures. They had some time ago the government of "all the talents," but this was the government of "all the budgets." Between February and August, no less than *four* budgets had been submitted to the consideration of the House! The first budget was brought forward in the grandest manner; it was intrusted, not to the chancellor of the exchequer, but to the prime minister himself (for such a measure demanded the expansive views and the high spirit of a statesman), and it proposed to double the income tax. Now, that was a scheme that was not taken up in an hour, or drawn with a pen upon the back of a

letter; that was clearly a financial measure which must have been most completely matured. We know how it was received. A menagerie before feeding time could alone give an idea of the unearthly yell with which the middle classes met this demand. Protests were sent up, indignation meetings were held, and there was a general impression that the income tax was about to be doubled because we were going to war! However, it was thought prudent not to double the income tax; and a second budget was introduced, and again a third, and, indeed, a fourth, all equally inefficient, and all needlessly taking up the time of the House, to the exclusion of useful legislation—of the useful legislation, which, it was stated, had not been practicable owing to the "mania for talk" of certain members. Yet fond hopes had been entertained of that last budget.

"Alas for this fourth budget!" sighed Mr. Disraeli. "It came late, and at a moment when we wanted glad tidings; but, unfortunately, it was not characterized by the sunny aspect which was desirable. I shall never forget the scene. It was a dreary moment. There was a thin House—the thinnest, I suppose, that ever attended a ceremony so interesting to every country, and especially to a commercial and financial country like England. I never saw a budget brought forward before an audience so gloomy and so small. No; I shall never forget the scene. It irresistibly reminded me of a celebrated character who, like the chancellor of the exchequer, had four trials in his time, and whose last was the most unsuccessful—I mean the great hero of Cervantes when he returned from his fourth and final expedition. The great spirit of Quixote had subsided; all that sally of financial chivalry which cut us down at the beginning of the session, and which trampled and cantered over us in the middle, was gone. Hon. gentlemen will remember the chapter to which I refer, which describes the period when the knight's illusions on the subject of chivalry were fast dispelling, and, losing

his faith in chivalry or finance, he returned home crestfallen and weary. The villagers, like the Opposition, were drawn out to receive him; and Cervantes tells us that, though they were aware of his weakness, they treated him with respect. His immediate friends—the barber, the curate, the bachelor Sampson Carasco, whose places might be filled in this house by the first lord of the treasury, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, and perhaps the president of the board of trade—were assembled, and with demure reverence and feigned sympathy they greeted him, broken in spirit and about for ever to renounce those delightful illusions under which he had sallied forth so triumphantly; but just at that moment when everything, though melancholy, was becoming—though sad, was in the best taste—Sancho's wife rushes forward and exclaims, 'Never mind your kicks and cuffs so you've brought home some money.' But this is just the thing that the chancellor of the exchequer has not brought. Such was the end of the fourth and final expedition, and such is the result of the fourth and final budget. The chancellor of the exchequer, during the whole session, has been bringing home barbers' basins instead of knightly helms; and at the last moment, true to his nature, to his vocation, and to his career, he finds instead of a surplus a deficiency, and instead of reducing taxation he commemorates his second year of finance by a second loan."

But if the government had been active with their budgets, they had been very remiss with other measures. He had in his hand, continued Mr. Disraeli, a list of forty-seven bills, two-thirds of them government measures, all of them important, and many of them referring to subjects of great interest, yet owing to the incapacity of the cabinet to deal with public business, and to turn to practical account the hours at their disposal, they had been entirely withdrawn, or else postponed to a time which might never arrive. He attributed the unsatisfactory

condition of public business to two causes. The first was that the cabinet when preparing their plans had no conviction, owing to their weak parliamentary position, that their measures would be carried. The second was that ministers did not mature or finish their measures, but threw them upon the House, for it to complete and prepare the means of governing the country. Hence the House of Commons, instead of being a purely legislative body, was every day becoming a more administrative assembly. It was in fact a great committee sitting on public affairs, in which every man spoke with the same right, and almost with the same weight. No more the disciplined array of traditionary influences and hereditary opinions—the realized experience of an ancient society and of a race that for generations had lived and flourished in the high practice of a noble system of self-government. Those were all past. Instead, the future was to provide them with a compensatory alternative in the conceits of the illiterate, the crotchets of the whimsical, the violent courses of a vulgar ambition that acknowledged no gratitude to antiquity, to posterity no duty, until at last that free and famous parliament of England was to subside to the low water-mark of those national assemblies and provisional conventions which were at the same time the terror and the derision of the world.

"Sir," he concluded, "I trace all this evil to the disorganization of party. I know that there are gentlemen in this House who affect to depreciate party government. I am not now going to enter into a discussion respecting party government; but this I will tell you—as I have told you before, in a manner which has not yet been met by any of the gentlemen who oppose my views on this subject—that you cannot choose between party government and parliamentary government. I say, you can have no parliamentary government if you have no party government; and therefore when gentlemen denounce party

government they strike at that scheme of government which, in my opinion, has made this country great, and which I hope will keep it great. I can foresee, though I dare not contemplate, the consequences of the system that now prevails. . . . I really believe that if you persist in this system it will effect results which no revolution has yet succeeded in accomplishing—which none of those conspirators that you have lately disturbed in their midnight conclaves have had the audacity to devise. I know no institution in the country that can long withstand its sapping and deleterious influence. As for the class of public men that have hitherto so gloriously administered the affairs of this country, I believe they will be swept off the face of our political world. For my part I protest against the system; I denounce it. Even at the eleventh hour I call upon the country to brand it with its indignant reprobation. But whatever may be the consequences—whatever may be the fortunes of individuals or the fate of institutions—I at least have had the satisfaction of calling public attention to this political plague spot—I at least have had the satisfaction of attempting to place in a clear light the cause of this great national evil. I have had more—I have had the consolation of justifying this great assembly, in which it is my highest honour to hold a seat, and of vindicating, in the face of England, the character and conduct of the House of Commons.” By both sides of the House this speech was much admired.

Mr. Disraeli during this period frequently returned to the subject of our foreign policy, and seldom discussed the question save in a condemnatory spirit. He did not consider that, by attempting to dictate to other nations, we advanced the cause of constitutional government. The cabinet, in his opinion, were departing from the established policy of England, and in several of the complications favoured by the foreign secretary he considered their successful issue impossible, and even if possible, of a positive disadvantage to the

interests of the country. It must, however, be candidly admitted that though in several of his criticisms Mr. Disraeli had right on his side, he failed to see with the clearness of Lord Palmerston the result of many of the diplomatic intrigues then agitating every embassy in Europe. He called the idea of German nationality dreamy and dangerous nonsense, yet at the present day such “nonsense” is a most decided fact. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, predicted the future with wonderful foresight. “Nature,” he writes to his brother about this date, “has not been bountiful to Prussia, at least to the district round Berlin, as regards soil and perhaps climate; but she has been more liberal as to mental endowments, and one cannot visit the country without being struck with the great intellectual activity which shows itself in all classes. There is scarcely a man in the country who cannot read and write. *In short, Prussia is taking the lead in German civilization; and as Austria has gone to sleep and will be long before she wakes, Prussia has a fine career open to her for many years to come.*” Therefore holding these opinions he favoured the development of German unity, whilst Mr. Disraeli opposed it, considering such an idea impracticable. Again as regards Italy the foreign secretary was right and Mr. Disraeli wrong. Lord Palmerston wished to see the whole of northern Italy united into one kingdom, and declared that the Austrians ought to have no place in Lombardy. “Austria,” he wrote to Lord Ponsonby, “has never possessed Italy as part of her empire, but has always held it as a conquered territory. There has been no mixture of races. The only Austrians have been the troops and the civil officers. She has governed it as you govern a garrison town, and her rule has always been hateful.” Any Englishman who remembers the condition of North Italy before the Villafranca treaty—the intensity of the social and political hate of the Italians, and especially of the Italian ladies against the despotism of the alien

race—will confirm in even stronger terms the opinion of Lord Palmerston. Mr. Disraeli was hostile to the idea of Italian unity, and supported the occupation of Lombardy by the Austrians. Indeed, with regard to most of the questions relating to our foreign policy during this time upon which he was at variance with Lord Palmerston, the usual prescience of the member for Bucks seems to have deserted him.

One debate upon this subject has a melancholy interest for us. A vote of censure on the foreign policy of the government had been carried in the House of Lords. The prime minister, however, expressed his intention not to resign, and argued that as the leader of the Conservatives had brought forward a vote of censure in the upper house it behoved the Conservative leader in the lower house to follow suit. Mr. Disraeli, aware that he was in a minority, was much too prudent a general to court a pitched battle. Thereupon Mr. Roebuck, who was always glad to cross swords with the Protectionist leader, brought forward a motion approving of the foreign policy of the government, and more particularly as to its latest development in the form of a quarrel with Greece respecting the miserable Don Pacifico affair. The motion conveyed an "oblique censure" on the course which Lord Aberdeen, the foreign minister of Sir Robert Peel, had pursued, and therefore called forth a defence from the late premier. It was not known whether Sir Robert would vote for or against the government, and his words were listened to anxiously by both sides of the House. It was universally admitted that he had never spoken with more effect. He referred in tones of unmistakable regret to old friendships interrupted, but not, as he hoped, beyond the possibility of renewal. It is gratifying to learn that this sentiment was cheered by the Protectionists with such cordiality as to cause Sir Robert considerable emotion. He hid his face in his hat, and remained silent for some moments. Then, proceeding with his speech, he vindicated

the action of his own government in the past, and laid down the general lines on which our foreign policy should always be constructed. It was the last time he was to address the House. The next day, whilst riding up Constitution Hill, he was thrown from his horse, and died a few days afterwards from the internal injuries he had sustained. "Peace to his ashes!" writes Mr. Disraeli. "His name will be often appealed to in that scene which he loved so well, and never without homage even by his opponents."

There were, however, few subjects, during this period of Whig ascendancy, which more frequently attracted the attention of Mr. Disraeli than the condition of the agricultural interest. All the evils he had foretold had come to pass; bread was not cheaper, wages had fallen; farmers, unable to compete with foreign imports, declined to renew their leases; and the country gentlemen, with the prospect of their farms being thrown upon their hands, and nothing but a gloomy future before them, began to retrench their expenditure, much to the loss of local trade. "We are to suffer," they said, "the same fate as the West India planters; the emancipation of the slaves has destroyed the sugar interest; the repeal of the corn laws is to usher in the ruin of the landed interest." Mr. Disraeli, as the leader of the country party, warmly supported its cause, and never lost an opportunity of bringing its condition before the House of Commons. What had been done should not be undone, he said; the corn laws had been repealed, and to struggle for their reimposition would be unsound statesmanship. Still it was possible to mitigate the evils that had ensued from the measure by a just method of relief. "My conscience," said he, addressing the agricultural association of Buckinghamshire, "does not accuse me that when the protective system was attacked, I did not do my best to uphold it. But to uphold a system that exists, and to bring back a system that has been abrogated, are two different things; and I am



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convinced myself that the system generally known as the 'protective system,' can never be brought back unless it is the interest of all classes—at least of all classes of importance—that that should be the principle which should regulate the national industry, and unless the nation speaks out upon the question in an unmistakable manner. (Let us remember this statement when we have to consider his conduct towards free-trade as chancellor of the exchequer.) But knowing as I do the difficulties in which the question is involved, am I, as the representative of an agricultural constituency, to sit still, and to say that those whose interests I represent are to be allowed to fall into a state of dilapidation because nothing but that one remedy can be acknowledged as the one that is satisfactory, when we all know that that is one that can be obtained only under most difficult circumstances? No; I look to the general question. What is the reason that the British agriculturist cannot compete with the foreign producer? The reason is, that he is subjected to a load of taxation which overwhelms his energies, and which curtails his enterprise."

This load of taxation Mr. Disraeli used all his eloquence in his place in parliament to have, if not entirely, at least partly removed. The new commercial system, he was never wearied of informing his hearers, had had a trial, a fair trial, and had failed; the only result he saw of free trade was to bring about commercial collapse. It had been of service to other countries, who had benefited by our folly, to the ruin of some of the best of our markets, whilst England, in her turn, had gained no corresponding advantage. "Reciprocity," he said, "is, indeed, a great principle—it is at once cosmopolitan and national. But the system you are pursuing is one quite contrary; you go on fighting hostile tariffs with free imports, and the consequence is, that you are following a course most injurious to the commerce of the country." He then exposed the injustice of the heavy

taxation that the land had to suffer. The whole of the local taxation of the country for national purposes fell mainly, if not exclusively, on real property, and visited with undue severity the occupiers of land. In fact, more than one-third of the revenue then derived from the excise was levied upon those agricultural products which, by the recent change in the law, had been exposed to direct competition with the untaxed commodities of foreign countries—the home producer thus being subjected to a burden of taxation which, by greatly enhancing the price, limited the demand for British produce, and to restrictions which injuriously interfered with the conduct of his trade and industry. These grievances, Mr. Disraeli earnestly contended, should be redressed, and a more equitable apportionment of the public burdens established. The agricultural classes had been promised relief, first by Sir Robert Peel, and then by Lord John Russell, from the heavy imposts to which they were subjected; but as yet nothing had been done. Was it wise to create this feeling of discontent and then to ignore it?

"You think," he warned, "you may trust the proverbial loyalty of the agricultural classes. Trust their loyalty, but do not abuse it. I daresay it may be said of them as it was said 3000 years ago in the most precious legacy of political science that has descended to us—I daresay it may be said of them that the agricultural class is the least given to sedition. I doubt not that is as true of the Englishman of the plain and of the dale as it was of the Greek of the isle and of the continent; but it would be just as well if you also recollected that the fathers of these men were the founders of your liberties, and that before this time their ancestors have bled for justice. Rely upon it that the blood of those men who refused to pay ship-money is not to be trifled with. Their conduct to you has exhibited no hostile feeling, notwithstanding the political changes that have abounded of late years, and all apparently to a diminution

of their power. They have inscribed a homely sentence on their rural banners, but it is one which, if I mistake not, is already again touching the heart and convincing the reason of England—'Live and let live.' You have adopted a different motto—you, the leading spirits on the benches which I see before me, have openly declared your opinion that if there were not an acre of land cultivated in England it would not be the worse for the country. You have all of you in open chorus announced your object to be the monopoly of the commerce of the universe, and to make this country the workshop of the world. Your system and theirs are exactly contrary. They invite union. They believe that national prosperity can only be produced by the prosperity of all classes. You prefer to remain in isolated splendour and solitary magnificence. But, believe me, I speak not as your enemy when I say, that it will be an exception to the principles which seem hitherto to have ruled society, if you can succeed in maintaining the success at which you aim without the possession of that permanence and stability which the territorial principle alone can afford. Although you may for a moment flourish after their destruction—although your ports may be filled with shipping, your factories smoke on every plain, and your forges flame in every city—I see no reason why you should form an exception to that which the page of history has mournfully recorded; that you, too, should not fade like the Tyrian dye, and moulder like the Venetian palaces. But, united with the land, you will obtain the best and surest foundation upon which to build your enduring welfare; you will find in that interest a counsellor in all your troubles—in danger your undaunted champion, and in adversity your steady customer."

His counsel was, however, not heeded; yet Mr. Disraeli, though ridiculed by the free-traders and defeated on the several motions he proposed to the House of Commons for the relief of the agricultural

interest, was not to be deterred from his object. To the dismay of the Whigs, and to the special annoyance of Mr. Cobden, he kept up a running fire of pertinent questions which were more easy to ask than to answer. He wanted to know, if the repeal of the corn laws had been so universally beneficial, why the poor rates had been raised seventeen per cent., why the manufacturing population who were said to be in the receipt of such high wages were flocking to the workhouses, why wages for piece work in the cotton trade had fallen, why the revenue which had formerly yielded a surplus was now marked by heavy deficiency, why there was such an increase—an increase in three years of seventy-four per cent.—in the number of able-bodied paupers in England, why in the three years 1845–48 statistics showed a diminution in our exports of £7,000,000, and other similar awkward inquiries. Then he again advocated the principle of reciprocity, and proposed to meet hostile tariffs of foreign countries with countervailing duties. He was opposed by Sir Robert Peel in his most unpleasant manner, for it is an error to suppose that after the repeal of the corn laws all sparring between the ex-premier and the member for Bucks was at an end. Frequent venomous passages of arms ensued between the two, as the reader of Hansard can see for himself.

On this occasion Mr. Disraeli thus retorted:—"I must say," he replied, referring to Sir Robert Peel's condemnation of the theory of reciprocity, "with all respect to the right hon. baronet, that there is something in his manner when he addresses on these subjects his former companions, which I will not say is annoying, but rather I would style somewhat astonishing. One would almost imagine from the tone of the right hon. gentleman that he had never for a moment held other opinions on this subject—that he had never entertained a doubt about it—that he had been born an infant Hercules, cradled in political economy, and

only created to strangle the twin serpents of protection and monopoly. . . . The right hon. gentleman should view one's errors at least with charity. He is not exactly the individual who, *ex cathedra*, should lecture us on the principles of political economy. He might, at least, when he denounces our opinions, suppose that in their profession we may perhaps be supported by that strength of conviction which, for nearly forty years, sustained him in those economical errors of which he was the learned and powerful professor. . . . He preaches a crusade against the system of commercial reciprocity. . . . Men of great scientific research have investigated and illustrated it; and I believe that it will require more time and discussion than it has yet received in this house, before it can be thrown into that limbo of stale opinions in which the right hon. gentleman has found it convenient to deposit so many of his former convictions."

In spite of the Free-traders having a majority in the House, the Protectionists possessed a large following in the country. Meetings were held in almost every shire, advocating reciprocity and protesting against the English producer being handicapped for the benefit of his foreign competitor. All that was wanted, cried impoverished tradesmen, was justice; but this the government refused to grant them. No notice was taken of their complaints; local taxation was not re-adjusted, and the imposts which specially pressed upon the agricultural interest still continued to paralyze industry. In a powerful speech, Mr. Disraeli warned the government of the dangers it incurred by exchanging the aristocratic principle, which was the sound foundation of England's fortunes, for that of middle-class tinkering and a false system of economy. "You set to work," he said, "to change the basis upon which English society was established—you disdain to attempt the accomplish-

ment of the best, and what you want to achieve is the cheapest. But I have shown you that, considered only as an economical principle, the principle is fallacious—that its infallible consequence is to cause the impoverishment and embarrassment of the people, as proved by the dark records to which I have had occasion so much to refer. But the impoverishment of the people is not the only ill consequence which the new system may produce. The wealth of England is not merely material wealth—it does not merely consist in the number of acres we have tilled and cultivated, nor in our havens filled with shipping, nor in our unrivalled factories, nor in the intrepid industry of our miners. Not these merely form the principal wealth of our country—we have a more precious treasure, and that is the character of the people. That is what you have injured. In destroying what you call class legislation, you have destroyed that noble and indefatigable ambition which has been the best source of all our greatness, of all our prosperity, and of all our power. I know of nothing more remarkable in the present day than the general discontent which prevails, accompanied as it is on all sides by an avowed inability to suggest any remedy. The feature of the present day is depression and perplexity. As far as I can judge, men in every place—in the golden saloon and in the busy mart of industry, in the port and in the exchange, by the loom or by the plough, every man says, 'I suffer, and I see no hope.'" He ended with a declaration of war against the ministry. It was on this occasion that Mr. Bernal Osborne described the motion of Mr. Disraeli as "a flash in the pan motion." Mr. Disraeli stood up at once and cried, "I say it is an earnest and serious motion; its object is to turn out the government. We may not succeed, but we shall succeed some day." They had not long to wait.

CHAPTER VI.

WHIG DECLINE.

WHILE the country was a prey to this state of gloom and discontent, an affair occurred which created no little excitement at the time. Our national pulse has occasionally been made to beat quicker at the rumours, circulated by the credulous and the suspicious, as to the prospect of foreign conquest. Now it has been Spain that threatened us, then Holland, then France, and there are some among us at the present day who deplore the unprotected condition of our east coast, and talk mysteriously of a German invasion. But it was reserved for the government of Lord John Russell to terrify us with the prospect and possibility of a spiritual conquest. Ever since the revival of ceremonialism or ritualism, which was one of the consequences of the Tractarian agitation, Rome has been busy in our midst with all her proselytizing machinery, and has had no reason to regret the success that has attended upon her efforts. Ritualism has been to her an active and ever useful decoy. The idle, the fashionable, and the frivolous, who wish a new excitement, find in the routine of ceremonialism a constant occupation. The loungeur, who is fond of music, flowers, processions, and a theatrical ritual, forsakes his, perhaps, dull parish church for the bright little temple of the ceremonialist, and thinks, as he sings, and kneels, and gesticulates, that he is engaged in public worship. The fashionable woman of the world, who, wearied or disappointed with society, moaned over the time that hung so heavily upon her hands, now finds in the resources of ceremonialism a constant occupation — early celebrations, frequent church services, the embroidery of altar cloths, the arrangement of church

decorations, the quiet festivities, the subdued flirtations, all make the once leaden day pass swiftly and pleasantly. That large floating population, who dislike religious worship, but who do not feel comfortable unless its forms are occasionally gone through, gladly avail themselves of the fascinations placed within their reach by the ceremonialist, and render thanks that at last the pill of public devotion has so charmingly gilded.

It is impossible to deny that ceremonialism is daily gaining converts among the higher, or to speak more correctly, among the wealthier classes. We are living under a plutocracy, and ritualism is essentially the religion for the rich. In ritualism plutocracy sees itself reflected: it is the caricature of an ancient faith, as the plutocrat is himself the caricature of the aristocrat of former days; it is gay, and gaudy, and fond of pomp and show, like the plutocrat; it is arrogant and self-asserting, its priests concealing their want of birth and scholarship by the robes of sacerdotal pretensions, as the plutocrat himself attempts to hide his deficiencies by the display of his wealth and money power: it is shallow, unscrupulous, and miserably effeminate. Yet no one can deny that it is a force in the country, and one daily extending in power. It is, however, at the present day, an accepted fact; the novelty is worn off; we are high church or low church as it suits our intellectual calibre, or æsthetic fancies, and the circumstance of being either is so much a matter of course as to excite little or no remark. In the year 1850 ceremonialism occupied a very different position, and created very different feelings. It was new, and there was an attractive hue

of mediævalism about it. Its apostles were, not as now, often literates glad to conceal the absence of the university hood by the richly woven cope, but distinguished men; and every one who attached himself to the new creed professed it with the fervour and intolerance of the typical apostate. Then after reflection, those who adopted these forms and ceremonies soon arrived at the truth, that the logical conclusion of ritualism was Romanism, and their next step was to enrol themselves as adherents of the Papacy. Few will contradict the assertion, that the teaching of the ritualist has caused, and is causing, numbers of Englishmen and Englishwomen to embrace the Roman Catholic faith. Such persons, however, now accept quietly and unostentatiously their new creed, and their desertion from Protestantism, therefore, creates little comment.

In 1850, and the years immediately preceding and succeeding that date, conversions to the Roman Church were not only very numerous, but the men who then swore fealty to the Pope were among the most eminent of England's sons; and hence their abandonment of the faith of their fathers caused considerable commotion. Thus sanguine Rome believed that the England which had repelled her advances since the days of Cardinal Pole, was ripe to receive those views she had rejected at the Reformation. Special missions were, therefore, organized with the one object of the conversion of the inhabitants of our stubborn island. Churches were built, monasteries were founded, nunneries sprang up in secluded spots; and so brilliant were the successes which this Catholic activity obtained, that, to foreign eyes, it appeared as if England was fast losing hold of her Protestantism. The pope, and continental archbishops and bishops, saw the Catholic churches in England crowded, the priests well received, the Irish dignitaries treated with every respect by the government of the day, and ritualism, the precursor of Romanism, the fashionable faith of the country. Yet it was, then as now, only an agitation on the surface—the

great bulk of the nation was untouched by the revival. The educated higher classes, the middle classes, and the lower classes, have always been opposed to the pretensions of the papist or the ceremonialist; the tendency of their religious feeling sets more towards deism or puritanism than to superstition. It is from the minority—from an emotional, a fashionable, a frivolous minority—that ritualism draws her votaries and Rome makes her converts.

The supreme Pontiff was not aware of this fact. A foreigner, holding his court in the distant city of Rome, and arriving at his conclusions only by rumour and hearsay, it was pardonable for him to mistake a broad but shallow tributary for the main stream. He dreamed that all England was in favour of a return to Catholicism when it was but a section of her people; and he issued his famous state paper which was only to show him how far the nation in its entirety was removed from any wish of again being subject to his jurisdiction. He was to find that his yoke was as hateful to England generally as it had ever been. The disappointment of the Vatican at the reception in England of this memorable document was, however, very keen. A totally different feeling had been expected. For the last few years the English Catholics had been appealing to Rome to be placed on the same footing as their brethren across St. George's channel. Instead of the vicars-apostolic who then superintended their spiritual condition, the English Catholics wished as in Ireland to have the country parcelled out into sees, and bishops openly acknowledged once more to rule over the land of à Becket and Pole. A few of the more latitudinarian English Catholics—who were Englishmen first and Papists afterwards—objected to the expression of this desire, since, they said, such an introduction might interfere with their allegiance to the sovereign, but these were in the minority. The mass were in favour of the establishment of a Catholic hierarchy, and for the free exercise of their

religion with all its accustomed pomp and splendour.

Nor was this feeling surprising; it was but the natural development of the liberty accorded by the Catholic Emancipation Act. In every earnest and enlightened mind religion is the predominating influence, and consequently the Papist, relieved of his political disabilities, was not content until his religious disabilities were also removed. He wanted the rank of his clergy to be frankly admitted, a hierarchy to be instituted, and his church to be treated as at least the equal of the established creed of the land. It was this development that Sir Robert Peel had feared, and which had caused him in the earlier days of Catholic agitation to oppose the Emancipation Act. "If you give the Catholics," said he, "that fair proportion of national power to which their numbers, wealth, talents, and education will entitle them, can you believe that they will or can remain contented with the limits which you assign to them? Do you think that they will view with satisfaction the state of your church or their own? Do you think that if they are constituted like other men; if they have organs, senses, affections, passions like ourselves; if they are, as no doubt they are, sincere and zealous professors of that religious faith to which they belong; if they believe your intrusive church to have usurped the temporalities which it possesses—do you think that they will not aspire to the re-establishment of their own church in all its ancient splendour? Is it not natural that they should? If I argue from my own feelings, if I place myself in their situation, I answer that it is. May I not then, without throwing any calumnious imputations upon any Roman Catholics . . . may I not, arguing from the motives by which men are actuated, from the feelings which nature inspires—may I not question the policy of admitting those who must have views hostile to the religious establishments of the state, to the capacity

of legislating for the interests of those establishments and the power of directing the government of which those establishments form so essential a part?"

Therefore believing, as nearly 300 years ago Cardinal Pole had believed when he set out from the monastery by the blue waters of the Lago di Guarda for the shores of England, that our country was no longer prejudiced against the Holy See, but softened, almost repentant, and well-nigh ready to return to its long-forsaken loyalty, Pius IX. issued the bull ordaining "the re-establishment in the kingdom of England and according to the common laws of the church, of a hierarchy of bishops deriving their titles from their own sees." The whole country was mapped out into dioceses and placed under the spiritual jurisdiction of Cardinal Wiseman as archbishop of Westminster, and twelve suffragans instead of the eight apostolic vicariates that had formerly existed. In addition to this invasion of the territory of a Protestant country, his Holiness reserved to himself a power which the Vatican has never dared to exercise in any Catholic kingdom. All bishops appointed to these new sees were to be nominated alone by the Pope, and the government of the day was not even permitted to have a voice in the elections or to exercise the right of veto. This piece of absolutism was at variance with the etiquette usually followed by the court of Rome on similar occasions. In all countries holding the Catholic faith the government either selects the candidate for the episcopate or exercises the right of veto on his appointment.

The case had arisen before. In 1813, on the motion of Mr. Grattan for the immediate consideration in a committee of the whole House of the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, the Papists had refused to grant the Crown a veto on the appointment of Roman Catholic bishops in Ireland. Sir Robert Peel thus expressed himself:—"Let the Catholics recollect," he said, "that they are not only unwilling to pay the same price for political

privileges that is exacted from the other subjects of His Majesty, but that they have hitherto refused to submit to the same restrictions that with their own consent are imposed upon the Catholics of other countries wherein the government is not Catholic; and this with the Pope's consent. When gentlemen refer us to the state of the Catholics of Canada, and to their admission to offices there and in Russia, let them recollect that the cases are not parallel—that in Canada the Protestant sovereign of this country has the appointment of the Catholic bishop of Quebec; and that when the Empress Catherine founded the Catholic church of Mohilau, the Pope, as a matter of course, granted his sanction to the appointment of a bishop nominated by the empress. Let gentlemen recollect when they charge us with bigotry and with intolerance, that the claims now advanced by the Catholics are claims which unquestionably would have been rejected without hesitation at a time when Catholic princes were on the throne of these realms, and when Catholics composed its legislature." It was therefore more the manner in which this papal bull was issued than the nature of the clauses contained in it which excited the ire of the English people. "The thing itself in truth," writes Lord Palmerston, "is little or nothing, and does not justify the irritation. What has goaded the nation is the manner, insolent and ostentatious, in which it has been done. . . . Nobody would have remarked or objected to the change if it had been made quietly, and only in the bosom of the church. What the Pope and his priests have lately done has materially injured the Catholic cause."

Certainly the excitement created by the measure was extreme, and when calmly considered was not a little ridiculous. Meetings were held all over the country denouncing in the strongest language the papal bull and the new cardinal. All the old Protestant stories as to the relationship existing between priests and nuns were

freely circulated, and pamphlets, especially illustrated pamphlets, which dealt in unsavoury monastic and conventual revelations, had an immense sale. It was at the time when the effigy of Guy Fawkes was generally carried about the streets; but now, instead of the old conspirator, with his well-known Spanish hat, and lantern, and transpontine boots, there appeared the stuffed figure of Cardinal Wiseman clad in his scarlet robes, which was consigned to the flames amid the cheers of an enthusiastic mob. Addresses poured in upon the queen from all parties and from all institutions, breathing the most fervid loyalty. At the lord mayor's dinner the lord chancellor awoke the wildest applause by introducing in his speech the quotation from Shakspeare—"Under my feet I'll stamp thy cardinal's hat, in spite of pope or dignities of the church." At the theatre Charles Kean was playing King John. When he came to the words in his reply to Pandulph—

"That no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;
But as we under Heaven are supreme head,
So, under him, that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,
Without the assistance of a mortal hand;
So tell the pope; all reverence set apart,
To him, and his usurp'd authority"—

the performance was stopped for several minutes, so frantic were the cheers of the audience. Protestant associations, Father Gavazzi, and "Dr. Cumming of Scotland," made excellent capital out of the national excitement, and caused the "no Popery" cry to swell in volume and fury.

Unfortunately Cardinal Wiseman had done all in his power to irritate the prejudices of the English people by the issue of a very arrogant and offensive pastoral letter. It was dated "out of the Flaminian Gate at Rome," thus reminding Englishmen that from out of Rome itself came the declaration of supremacy over them, and it was addressed to the faithful about to become his spiritual subjects. It calmly ignored the legal rights of the English episcopate,

and took not the slightest notice of the existence of any other church or faith in the kingdom save that of the Catholics. It affected to look upon England as a nation restored by an act of spiritual sovereignty to the body of the Roman church, and regarded the new hierarchy as the only legitimate source of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. "The great work," it declared, "is complete; what you have long desired and prayed for is granted. Your beloved country has received a place among the fair churches which normally constituted form the splendid aggregate of Catholic communion; Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament, from which its light had long vanished, and begins now anew its course of regularly adjusted action around the centre of unity, the source of jurisdiction, of light, and of vigour." The prime minister was far too feverish and impulsive a man to allow an occasion like the present to escape his trenchant criticisms. The Whigs were no longer in the ascendant, they were daily becoming more and more unpopular in the country; and Lord John Russell now thought he saw his way to appeal to the passions of the nation, and improve his political position. As in his famous Edinburgh letter he had made a bid for office by appealing to the free traders, so now, in his equally memorable Durham letter, he bade for a further tenure of power by appealing to the Protestantism of the country. The bishop of Durham had written to the prime minister upon the recent papal aggression, and Lord John, without any consultation with his colleagues, at once penned the following answer, which forthwith found its way into the newspapers:—

"DOWNING STREET,
November 4, 1850.

"My Dear Lord,—I agree with you in considering the late aggression of the pope upon our Protestantism as insolent and insidious, and I therefore feel as indignant as you can do upon the subject. I not only promoted to the utmost of my power the claims of Roman Catholics to all civil rights; but I thought it right, and even

desirable, that the ecclesiastical system of the Roman Catholics should be the means of giving instruction to the numerous Irish emigrants in London and elsewhere, who, without such help, would have been left in heathen ignorance. This might have been done, however, without any such innovation as we have now seen.

"It is impossible to confound the recent measures of the pope with the division of Scotland into dioceses by the Episcopal Church, or the arrangement of districts in England by the Wesleyan Conference. There is an assumption of power in all the documents which have come from Rome—a pretension to supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and undivided sway which is inconsistent with the queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishops and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation, as asserted even in Roman Catholic times.

"I confess, however, that my alarm is not equal to my indignation. Even if it shall appear that the ministers and servants of the pope in this country have not transgressed the law, I feel persuaded that we are strong enough to repel any outward attacks. The liberty of Protestantism has been enjoyed too long in England to allow of any successful attempt to impose a foreign yoke upon our minds and consciences. No foreign prince or potentate will be permitted to fasten his fetters upon a nation which has so long and so nobly vindicated its right to freedom of opinion, civil, political, and religious.

"Upon this subject, then, I will only say that the present state of the law shall be carefully examined, and the propriety of adopting any proceedings with reference to the recent assumption of power deliberately considered.

"There is a danger, however, which alarms me much more than any aggression of a foreign sovereign. Clergymen of our own church, who have subscribed the Thirty-nine Articles and acknowledged in explicit terms the queen's supremacy, have been the most forward in leading their flock, step by step, to the very verge of the precipice. The honour paid to saints, the claim of infallibility for the church, the superstitious use of the sign of the cross, the muttering of the Liturgy so as to disguise the language in which it is written, the recommendation of auricular confession, and the administration of penance and absolution—all these things are pointed out by clergymen of the Church of England as worthy of adoption, and are now openly reprehended by the bishop of London in his charge to the clergy of his diocese. What then is the danger to be apprehended from a foreign prince of no great power, compared to the danger within the gates from the unworthy sons of the Church of England herself?

"I have little hope that the propounders and framers of these innovations will desist from their insidious course; but I rely with confidence on the people of England, and I will not bate a jot of heart or life so long as the glorious principles and the immortal martyrs of the Reformation shall be held in reverence by the great mass of a nation which looks with contempt on the mummeries of superstition, and with scorn at the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul.—I remain, with great respect, &c.,

J. RUSSELL."

This letter was received by the country with various feelings. By some it was looked upon as an exaggeration of matters, and as an unworthy attempt to fan the passions of the hour. The majority of the premier's colleagues, who had not been consulted as to the composition of this famous private state-paper, regarded its issue with disfavour, and as calculated to act detrimentally to the position of the cabinet. But by a large portion of the nation its thoroughly Protestant tone, and especially the strictures passed upon the ritualists, were hailed with delight.

The country party have always been the warm adherents of royalty's great ally, the Church of England. They regard her not only as a grand old historical corporation, but as a communion in which will be found a purer doctrine, a deeper faith, and a more enlightened discipline than in any other religious body. Their social instincts make them dislike dissent, their religious principles make them dislike Popery. To the old-fashioned country gentleman, whose hall or manor-house is within easy reach of the village church where moulder the bones of his ancestors, the Church of England is precisely the communion suited to his tastes, his habits, and his prejudices: her creed is Protestant, her clergy are gentlemen, and her discipline is orderly, without mummery. Holding these views, the country party had in bygone days been among the most earnest of the opponents to the emancipation of the Roman Catholics, whilst the sickly sacerdotal pretensions of the Puseyites

were even more repugnant to their manly English nature. They agreed with Lord Eldon, that the union between the church and the state was not supported to make the church political, but the state religious; and that the English constitution was not based upon the principles of equal rights to all men indiscriminately, but of equal rights to all men conforming to, and complying with, the tests which that constitution required for its ascendancy.

As the leader of the country party, Mr. Disraeli was desired to express his opinion upon the recent agitation. In his "Vindication of the English Constitution," he writes, "It is one of the leading principles of the policy of England that the religious discipline and future welfare of our citizens are even of greater importance than their political or present well-being;" and as we proceed in this history we shall see how on subsequent occasions he rallied the Tory party for the defence of the union of church and state. He therefore gladly complied with the request, though he considered that, on the present occasion, the Government was more to be blamed than the Vatican for the scare that had been created. Like the prime minister, he expressed his views through the medium of the post. He addressed a letter to the lord-lieutenant of his county. He considered the Pope was not so much to blame as the present cabinet; if Lord John Russell and his colleagues had not foolishly gone out of their way to show such marked attention to the Roman Catholic prelates of Ireland, by openly giving them the rank they silently claimed, the supreme pontiff would never have been encouraged to put forth his recent pretensions. There had always been Roman Catholic bishops in England who had exercised authority over their respective congregations, and from them had received every homage; yet the state had never taken any more notice of them than it had of the chief rabbi or the president of the body of the Wesleyans. On the other hand, the present govern-

ment had granted to the Irish prelates their titles of honour, had placed them in the table of precedence, and had treated them as if they were on a footing with our own hierarchy. "After the recognition given by the government to the Irish hierarchy," writes Mr. Disraeli to the lord-lieutenant, and commenting upon the contents of the Durham letter, "His Holiness might well deem himself at liberty to apportion England into dioceses, to be ruled over by bishops. Instead of supposing that he was taking a step 'insolent and insidious,' he might conceive he was acting in strict accordance with Her Majesty's government. The fact is, the whole question has been surrendered and decided in favour of the Pope by the present government. The ministers who recognized the pseudo-archbishop of Tuam as a peer and a prelate, cannot object to the appointment of a pseudo-archbishop of Westminster, even though he be a cardinal. On the contrary, the loftier dignity should, according to their table of precedence, rather invest his Eminence with a still higher patent of nobility, and permit him to take the wall of his Grace of Canterbury, and the highest nobles of the land. The policy of the present government is, that there shall be no distinction between England and Ireland. I am therefore rather surprised that the cabinet are so 'indignant,' as a certain letter with which we have just been favoured informs us they are."

The Houses assembled February 4, 1851, and at once the papal bull became the prominent subject of discussion. "The recent assumption of certain ecclesiastical titles," said Her Majesty in the speech from the throne, "conferred by a foreign power, has excited strong feelings in this country, and large bodies of my subjects have presented addresses to me, expressing attachment to the throne, and praying that such assumptions should be resisted. I have assured them of my resolution to maintain the rights of my crown and the independence of the nation against all encroachment,

from whatever quarter it may proceed. I have at the same time expressed my earnest desire and firm determination, under God's blessing, to maintain unimpaired the religious liberty which is so justly prized by the people of this country. It will be for you to consider the measure which will be laid before you on this subject."

A lively debate then ensued. Lord John Russell made a long explanation as to the publication of the Durham letter; Mr. Roebuck bitterly attacked it for having been the means of creating an unworthy panic in the country, and condemned the cabinet for the course they had pursued with regard to the treatment of the Irish hierarchy. Mr. Disraeli also took part in the discussion. He did not think, he said, that the famous Durham letter was solely provoked by the appointment of Cardinal Wiseman as archbishop of Westminster. He believed the noble lord at the head of the government thought that the time had now arrived, when he felt that a great change would take place in the relations which must hereafter subsist between the Crown of England and the Pope of Rome, and the prime minister had availed himself of this last drop in the cup to adopt the policy which he had long meditated. He could not suppose that the noble lord only contemplated the bringing in of a bill to prevent Roman Catholics from styling themselves bishop or archbishop of any of the towns or cities in the queen's dominions; he could not be about to bring in any such measure as that, because then he would not have been justified in stirring up the passions of a mighty people, in exciting their highest and holiest feelings, and in raising in this country a spirit of controversy and polemical dispute which recalled the days of the Stuarts. "But if the noble lord," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "be prepared to do a great deal—if he be prepared to solve the great political problem that may not be incapable of solution, but that no minister has ever solved—then, indeed, he may be justified in the course he has taken; then,

indeed, he may lay claim to the reputation and the character of a great minister. Such is the measure he must bring in to authorize the course he has taken; such is the measure I for one would humbly support; such is the measure I believe the country expects; and if it does not receive it, I believe the opinions of Protestants and Roman Catholics on one point will be unanimous—that the conduct of the noble lord cannot be justified."

We know what was the measure which Lord John introduced. A bill was brought in to prevent the assumption by Roman Catholics of titles taken from any territory or place within the United Kingdom under penalty of a severe fine, and to render void all acts done by or bequests made to persons under such titles. The reception given to the measure could hardly have gratified the author. Mr. Roebuck declared that it was "one of the meanest, pettiest, and most futile measures that ever disgraced even bigotry itself." Mr. Bright said it was "a meresham to bolsterup Church ascendancy." Mr. Disraeli was, however, the most trenchant critic of the bill. He would not oppose, he said, the introduction of the measure because he thought it important "that the people, the community in general, should see what is the result of that remarkable agitation which has been fostered by the government, and which has led, I admit, to a national demonstration seldom perhaps equalled." After all these heavings the mountain had been delivered, and this most ridiculous of mice was the result! "What!" he cried, "was it for this that the lord high chancellor of England trampled on a cardinal's hat, amid the patriotic acclamations of the metropolitan municipality? Was it for this that the first minister, with more reserve, delicately hinted to the assembled guests that there had been occasions when perhaps even greater danger was at hand, as, for instance, when the shadow of the Armada darkened the seas of England? Was it for this that all the counties and corporations of England met?

Was it for this that all our learned and religious societies assembled at a period the most inconvenient, in order, as they thought, to respond to the appeal of their sovereign, and to lose no time in assuring Her Majesty of their determination to guard her authority and her supremacy? Was it for this that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge—that the great city of London itself—went in solemn procession to offer at the foot of the throne the assurance of their devotion? Was it for this that the electric telegraph conveyed Her Majesty's response to those addresses, that not an instant might be lost in re-assuring the courage of the inhabitants of the metropolis? And what are these remedies? Some Roman Catholic priests are to be prevented from taking titles which they had already been prevented to a very considerable extent from taking by the existing law; the only difference being that they are now to be prevented from taking a territorial title which has not been assumed by a prelate of the National Church; while it seems that to that provision there is to be attached a penalty. But a penalty of what amount? One of 40s. perhaps. That is not yet stated, but a penalty of that amount would, in my opinion, be worthy of the occasion."

Throughout the progress of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill through the House of Commons Mr. Disraeli pursued the same course of banter and opposition. He called it "a blunder of the sudden," in allusion to the manner in which the prime minister had described the papal bull; he protested against the Whigs being allowed to govern the country by "a continual popish plot;" he objected to the penalty clause. "What a mockery," he cried, "when Her Majesty's ministers themselves be-Grace and be-Lord these individuals, that they should now propose penal enactments because they are treated by the rest of Her Majesty's subjects with respect and with honour!" After much discussion, to finish the story of this miserable piece of legislation, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, with all the vigour

of its clauses eliminated in committee, became a law which was never obeyed and which was, after having been treated for some years with silent contempt, quietly erased from the statute-book. "The ministers," writes a recent historian, "were in fact in the difficulty of all statesmen who bring in a measure, not because they themselves are clear as to its necessity or its efficacy, but because they find that something must be done to satisfy public feeling, and they do not know of anything better to do at the moment. The history of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was therefore a history of blunder, unlucky accident, and failure from the moment it was brought in until its ignominious and ridiculous repeal many years after, and when its absolute impotence had been not merely demonstrated, but forgotten."

For a brief moment ministerial incapacity was to be interrupted. Mr. Disraeli had introduced a motion calling upon the cabinet to bring forward some measure for the relief of the agricultural interest, which was then terribly depressed; a division ensued, and the government won by a small majority. In the next struggle they were to sustain defeat. During the last few years the Reform Bill of 1832, in spite of the chorus of approval with which it had at first been received, had become the subject of much criticism among certain members of the Liberal party. It was said that it was not sufficiently comprehensive, that it was somewhat invidious in the nature of its clauses, and that there was scope for amendment with regard to various of its provisions. The most prominent amongst the discontented was Mr. Locke King, the member for East Surrey, a man of much energy, with a keen eye to all absurd or unjust entries in the statute-book, of no little eloquence, and of considerable popularity with his party. In the summer of 1850 he had asked leave to bring in a bill to make the franchise in counties in England and Wales the same as that in boroughs, by giving the right of voting to

all occupiers of tenements of the annual value of ten pounds. This motion was supported by Mr. Hume, of economical notoriety, by Mr. Bright, by Sir De Lacy Evans, who then represented Westminster, and by others of the more advanced section of the Liberals. It was opposed by Lord John Russell, though on a subsequent occasion when the bill came up for the second reading his lordship intimated that he was prepared to recede from his previous principle of "finality" and to disturb the parliamentary settlement of 1832.

Mr. Disraeli delivered a short speech on this occasion, expressing disapproval of Mr. Locke King's motion. He had been particularly struck, he said, at the erroneous apprehension on the part of several members of what the English constitution really was. Then, according to a custom not infrequent with him, he blended with his speech a little of the elements of a constitutional lecture. He had always believed that every gentleman, whatever his opinions might be as to the proper franchise for England or Ireland, had considered that the constitution of England was a monarchy, modified by estates of the realm—that was, by privileged classes, who were invested with those privileges for the advantage of the community. They had a Throne—they had a body of Peers, and a body of Commons, who were in possession of certain privileges, which privileges they might increase or diminish; but still those privileges had always been, and must remain, the privileges of particular orders, and enjoyed by only a limited portion of the community. They knew what was the result, whatever might have been the original intention of such a constitution. It had established the aristocratic principle in the widest and most noble sense of the term. But it had permitted all classes to aspire; and however society might be divided in olden days, there was no class which could say it did not possess the privilege of electing representatives to the House of Commons, from the proudest manorial lord

to the humblest artisan. Less than a quarter of a century ago that was the acknowledged state of things. However, they thought proper to terminate that scheme. It was terminated by Lord John Russell in his official capacity; enthusiastically supported by many members of the House. There was no member opposite who had not acquired his seat in the House by adopting the views of government, and the principles of the Reform party. They were responsible for, and they ought to be grateful to, the Reform Act. But now a great many gentlemen opposite seemed discontented with the settlement of 1832, who at that time were ready to vote black was white in its behalf—who went to the country for the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill—who had so profoundly and so maturely investigated the question, that they resolved that the perfect scheme which they adopted should not be altered or modified, and who gave their deliberate consent to a change which they determined should be permanent. But ever since the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill, had been gained, the result appeared to give only partial satisfaction. Querulous complaints of the law were constantly heard from hon. gentlemen opposite, who were sent to that House by the operation of that law, and who represented what were called liberal opinions in that House. Those hon. gentlemen, they found, were constantly quarrelling with the political arrangements which sent them into the House.

He spoke not only his own feelings, continued Mr. Disraeli, but the feelings of many of his friends, when he said they had no superstitious reverence for the Reform Act. He admitted he would have opposed it had he been in the House at the time, brought forward as it was by a party, in opposition to whom, from historical conviction, he ever acted. But it was carried by a large majority; it was received as the settlement of a great public question—not a great party question. Still, though the Tories had no superstitious

reverence for the bill, they could not be blind to the great public inconvenience and injury likely to arise from the proceedings of certain gentlemen opposite, who, in a retail manner, were sapping that settlement which they accepted at the time with such wholesale enthusiasm. He did not think, he said, and let us remember his words when we have to deal with his bill of 1867, that it was a settlement that might not have been improved. He regretted *that when the privileges of the working classes were abrogated, no equivalent was devised.* He regretted *that in the Reform Act the rights of the working classes were not more respected.* But who voted against them? Who voted against the freemen? The liberal members, the clamourers for the whole bill, and nothing but the bill. He wished to know what hon. gentlemen opposite meant. Did they mean to say they would no longer endure the ancient constitution of the country—a monarchy modified by the political estates of the realm? If they were of opinion that every acre ought to be represented—every pound sterling of capital, and every individual of the population, ought to be represented in the House—if they said that, then he replied, they proposed a revolution in the constitution. If the House was to represent all material and personal interests, it was absurd to suppose any influence could be exercised by any other estate of the realm, or by the Crown itself. But were they prepared to do that? If so, why did they come forward with a £10 franchise, which, when met by an amendment, they withdrew? Were they prepared to say that every man “full grown” should be entitled to the suffrage, and ought to be allowed to exercise it? Why not make the proposition? On the contrary, the most eminent members of their party had made speeches against it. They did not propose that; they disclaimed it; they shrank from it; they admitted that it was dangerous. Now, would these reformers meet the question fairly, and tell the

House that they were prepared to change the constitution of the country? They would not. Not one of them would do that, because they knew that their answer would be that they would have then to entrust privileges to persons they would not confer them on.

"Is the possession of the franchise to be a privilege," asked Mr. Disraeli, "the privilege of industry and public virtue, or is it to be a right—the right of every one, however degraded, however indolent, however unworthy? I am for the system," he continued, "which maintains in this country a large and free government, having confidence in the energies and the faculties of man. Therefore, I say, make the franchise a privilege, but let it be the privilege of the civic virtues. Hon. gentlemen opposite would degrade the franchise to the man, instead of raising the man to the franchise. If you want to have a free aristocratic country—free because aristocratic—I use the word aristocratic in its noblest sense—I mean that aristocratic freedom which enables every man to achieve the best position in the state to which his qualities entitle him; I know not that we can do better than adhere to the mitigated monarchy of England, with power in the Crown, order in one estate of the realm, and liberty in the other. It is from that happy combination that we have produced a state of society that all other nations look upon with admiration and envy."

Shortly after the bare victory of the Whigs upon Mr. Disraeli's motion to relieve the agricultural interest, the member for East Surrey a second time brought forward his pet scheme for the consideration of the House. The motion was again opposed by Lord John Russell, but on this occasion the ministers sustained a severe defeat; and the premier, aware of the unpopularity of the cabinet, felt he had no alternative but to tender his resignation to the queen. And now the usual anxiety prevailed as to who was to be the successor. There was no lack of material out of which a cabinet

might be formed, if the different elements would put aside their prejudices and coalesce. There were the Whigs, the Protectionists, and the followers of Sir Robert Peel; a coalition between either of these parties would form a strong government; without such coalition any government taking office would be weak. No combination could, however, be effected; each party had its own favourite measures which it declined to throw over. The Conservatives would not abandon the policy of protection; the Peelites would have nothing to do with the wretched Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, then in all the throes of amendments, whilst nothing would induce the Whigs to forsake the bill. Lord John Russell essayed to effect a coalition with the followers of Sir Robert Peel, and failed. Lord Aberdeen, the leader of the Peelites, declined in the present condition of the country as to the hatred expressed against papal aggression, to form an administration. Lord Stanley then tried his hand, but was not successful. Thus, after some little delay, and much feverish expectancy on the part of the Tadpoles and the Tapers, there was no other course to be adopted than for the late cabinet again to take office. After an interregnum of eleven days Her Majesty, having had a consultation with the Duke of Wellington, commanded Lord John Russell and his colleagues to resume their respective posts. This order was publicly announced March 3, 1851.

It was evident to all that the re-instated cabinet was a makeshift, which would soon go the way of all governments holding their power on sufferance. The opening of the Great Exhibition—that "unwieldy, ill-devised, unwholesome castle of glass," as Colonel Sibthorp called it—"up-springing from the verdant sod" in Hyde Park, for a time diverted the attention of the critical public from the blunders of the Ministry; but soon Lord John Russell and his colleagues, by their promises unfulfilled, their inconsistencies, and their incapacity to interpret the wishes of the nation, brought

themselves into still further discredit. The budget of Sir Charles Wood caused universal dissatisfaction; and as Mr. Disraeli pointed out, the boasted surplus had been cut down to half of its original estimate, owing to certain claims made upon the government by the East India Company. In addition to this disappointment, the measures introduced for the relief of the agricultural interest had been withdrawn. The continuation of the income tax was also unpopular. When it had first been introduced the free traders were most hostile to the measure; it had been stigmatized as "a fungus growing from the tree of monopoly," and as "the most unequal, most unjust, and most vexatious" of imposts. Yet the party which condemned it when in opposition now retained it when in power. Indeed, as Mr. Disraeli said, they could not do without it, for that tax was "the foundation of the new commercial system," the "only security for the continuance of free trade." But what dealt the final blow to the tottering cabinet was what the French called *l'affaire Palmerston*.

The foreign secretary was undoubtedly the ablest man in the government; his memorable speech on the Don Pacifico debate proved that he had a command of language, and a ready mastery of details, with which until then he had not been credited. A man of great quickness in the despatch of business, somewhat impulsive and hasty in his expressions, both in his official correspondence and conversation, and of much independence of character, it was his custom as foreign secretary to take more upon himself than properly appertained to his post. According to the strict rules of official etiquette it was the duty of the minister who presided over the Foreign Office to transmit all important despatches to the chief of the cabinet for perusal, which were afterwards laid before the sovereign for the royal approval. Lord Palmerston, however, preferred to ignore this custom; he not only forwarded important state papers to the different embassies

without first showing them to the prime minister, but he went so far as to transmit them without deigning to consult the opinion of his sovereign. This culpable independence of conduct had on more than one occasion compromised the Crown, without the Crown having been in the least aware of what the course was that had been pursued. The prince consort, who was deeply interested in foreign affairs, and upon whose sound judgment, accurate prescience, and carefully considered conclusions, the queen naturally much relied, was offended at the easy manner in which the foreign secretary replied to despatches without due consideration, and without consulting either Her Majesty or his colleagues in the cabinet. He brought the matter before the Duke of Wellington, who occupied very much the same position to the court as the family solicitor does to an ordinary household, and asked him whether, when he was premier, he had not been in the habit of interfering in the Foreign Office. The duke answered most emphatically, "There never went a paper which I had not brought to me first; but Palmerston could at no time be trusted, as he was always anxious to do things by himself." It was now considered necessary to read our hasty and independent foreign secretary a lesson which would bring him to his bearings, and restrain his freedom of action in the future. Lord John Russell, who it appears had more than once complained of the license of his subordinate in this matter—Lord John, who took newspapers into his confidence before extending it to his colleagues—was summoned to the Isle of Wight, and a grave consultation held. The deliberation resulted in the following severe memorandum being drawn up and forwarded to Lord Palmerston:—

"With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the queen had with Lord John Russell the other day, and Lord Palmerston's disavowal that he ever intended any disrespect to her by the various neglects of which she has had so long and so often to complain, she thinks it right,

in order to prevent any mistake for the future, to explain what it is she expects from the foreign secretary.

"She requires :

"First, That he distinctly state what he proposes to do in a given case, in order that the queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her royal sanction.

"Second, Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the minister; such an act she must consider as failure in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that minister. She expects to be kept informed of what passes between him and the foreign ministers, before important decisions are taken based upon that intercourse; to receive the foreign despatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they must be sent off. The queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston.

"OSBORNE, August 12, 1850."

The foreign secretary received this rebuke with perfect temper, and behaved in the matter like the high-minded gentleman he really was. He replied in his usual pleasant manner to his chief. He had taken, he said, a copy of the memorandum and would not fail to attend to the directions which it contained; he explained why he had not in the past sent despatches to the queen, and promised to give no further cause for complaint in the future; then he good-humouredly added that if it were necessary for him to have an additional clerk or two to do any extra work, the Treasury, perhaps, would not grudge the expense. We shall learn afterwards the reason why he acted on this occasion with this well-bred restraint.

For a time the foreign secretary conformed to the instructions he had received, and behaved with the caution and discretion which generally follow a severe reproof. But independence of action was too strongly woven in the texture of his mind for him to remain long controlled and repressed. The English people had sympathized strongly with Hungary in her revolt against Austria; and when Louis

Kossuth, who had been dictator of Hungary during the greater part of the insurrection, reached our shores he was the lion of the hour, and received quite an ovation wherever he showed himself. Lord Palmerston keenly sympathized with the Hungarians, and had used his influence to prevent the surrender of Kossuth to Austria. Under the prevailing excitement it struck certain inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets, Finsbury, and Islington that the present moment would be an excellent opportunity to show their appreciation of the conduct of Lord Palmerston in the matter. Accordingly addresses were drawn up, in which the foreign secretary was thanked for what he had done towards securing the safety and liberation of the "illustrious patriot and exile;" whilst the Emperors of Austria and Russia were stigmatized as "odious and detestable assassins" and "merciless tyrants and despots"—terms, whether true or not, scarcely to be used without reproof before an English foreign secretary concerning sovereigns with whom England was at peace. Lord Palmerston, however, took no notice of these offensive epithets in the addresses handed to him, beyond saying that "he could not be expected to concur in some of the expressions," and declared himself "extremely flattered and highly gratified" at the compliment paid him by the enlightened population of the Tower Hamlets, Finsbury, and Islington. The whole proceeding was, however, viewed with extreme displeasure by the queen and the prince consort. "It is no question with the queen," wrote Her Majesty to the prime minister, "whether she pleases the Emperor of Austria or not, but whether she gives him a just ground of complaint. And if she does so, she can never believe that this will add to her popularity with her own people." At the express wish of the queen the conduct of Lord Palmerston was brought before a cabinet council. No formal resolution as to the want of caution displayed by the foreign secretary on this occasion was adopted; but Lord John Russell

wrote to the queen expressing a hope that the deliberation of the council would have its effect upon Lord Palmerston, and that he himself had specially urged upon his colleague the necessity of guarded conduct in the present very critical condition of Europe.

And now this *enfant terrible* of the cabinet was to show how he interpreted the words "guarded conduct." The very day he had received this piece of advice, the news of the *coup d'état* in Paris reached London. The queen, most anxious that nothing should be said by Lord Normanby, our representative at Paris, to commit England to any expression of approval of what had been done, sent full instructions to Lord John Russell to that effect. Thus directed, Lord Palmerston wrote officially to Lord Normanby, informing him that he was to make no change in his diplomatic relations with the French government. To this despatch our ambassador returned a reply, which created an immense sensation throughout the kingdom. He wrote that having called on M. Turgot, the French minister for foreign affairs, to communicate the instructions he had received from Her Majesty's government, he was informed by that gentleman that Count Walewski, the French ambassador in London, had written to Paris that Lord Palmerston had expressed in conversation his entire approval of the course Louis Napoleon had pursued! Was such indiscretion possible? The queen at once wrote to Lord John Russell:—

"The queen sends the enclosed despatch from Lord Normanby to Lord John Russell, from which it appears that the French government *pretend* to have received the entire approval of the late *coup d'état* by the British government, as conveyed by Lord Palmerston to Count Walewski. The queen cannot believe in the truth of the assertion, as such an approval given by Lord Palmerston would have been in *complete* contradiction to the line of strict neutrality and passiveness which the queen had expressed her desire to see followed with regard to the late convulsions at Paris, and which was approved by the cabinet, as stated in Lord John Russell's letter of the 6th inst. Does Lord John know anything about

the alleged approval, which, if true, would again expose the honesty and dignity of the queen's government in the eyes of the world?

"OSBORNE, December 13, 1851."

Lord Palmerston was called upon for an explanation. He delayed furnishing any statement as to his conduct for some days; but when the document had been drawn up, it fully showed that, in direct defiance of the queen's commands, and without any consultation with his colleagues, he had taken upon himself to thoroughly approve of the steps the prince-president had taken. Such gross insubordination and compromising activity could not be passed over. Lord Palmerston was requested by his chief to resign the seals of the Foreign Office, and Lord Granville was sworn in as his successor.

Parliament met February 3, 1852. The Palmerston case was, of course, uppermost in men's minds, and the House of Commons was eager to listen to ministerial explanations. In the debate on the address the prime minister took the first opportunity of stating the facts of the case. He narrated fully the history of the differences which had long existed between Lord Palmerston and his colleagues; he stated the rebuffs the foreign secretary had brought upon himself from the court; and much to the astonishment of the House, he for the first time informed it of the severe memorandum drawn up by the queen. Lord Palmerston strongly objected to this document having been made public; and in his recent biography he gives his reasons why he received the memorandum so submissively, at the same time complaining of the conduct of Lord John Russell.

"I said to the Duke [of Bedford]," he writes to Lord Lansdowne, "that it was very unhandsome by me, and very wrong by the queen, for him, John Russell, to have read in the House of Commons the queen's angry memorandum of August, 1850, hinting at dismissal. In regard to the queen, he was thus dragging her into the discussion, and making her a party to a

question which constitutionally ought to be, and before parliament could only be, a question between me and the responsible adviser of the Crown; and I said that this mention of the queen as a party to the transaction had given rise to newspaper remarks much to be regretted, and which the prime minister ought not to have given an occasion for. I said that, as regards myself, the impression created by his reading that memorandum was, that I had submitted to an affront which I ought not to have borne; and several of my friends told me, after the discussion, that they wondered I had not sent in my resignation on receiving that paper from the queen through John Russell. My answer to those friends, I said, had been that the paper was written in anger by a lady as well as by a sovereign, and that the difference between a lady and a man could not be forgotten even in the case of the occupant of a throne; but I said that, in the first place, I had no reason to suppose that this memorandum would ever be seen by, or be known to anybody but the queen, John Russell, and myself; that, secondly, my position at that moment, namely, in August, 1850, was peculiar. I had lately been the object of violent political attack, and had gained a great and signal victory in the House of Commons and in public opinion: to have resigned then would have been to have given the fruits of victory to adversaries whom I had defeated, and to have abandoned my political supporters at the very moment when by their means I had triumphed. But, beyond all that, I had represented to my friends, by pursuing the course which they thought I ought to have followed, I should have been bringing for decision at the bar of public opinion a personal quarrel between myself and my sovereign—a step which no subject ought to take, if he can possibly avoid it; for the result of such a course must be either fatal to him or injurious to the country. If he should prove to be in the wrong, he would be irretrievably condemned; if the sovereign

should be proved to be in the wrong, the monarchy would suffer."

In the debate that ensued, Mr. Disraeli was not silent.

The queen's speech had been read, and it was on the occasion of moving an address in answer to the communication from the throne that the leader of the Opposition subjected the cabinet to his criticism. He dealt first with the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, and then examined the other matters contained in the speech. He complained that the explanation of the prime minister as to the dismissal of his colleague was not satisfactory; it appeared to him "a Downing Street eclogue," and the reasons given were insufficient to account "for circumstances so remarkable, and a catastrophe so sudden." The political system represented by Lord Palmerston Mr. Disraeli had always felt it his duty to oppose, though he had ever regarded the late foreign secretary as a faithful British minister, believing that the great object of his policy was to maintain and vindicate the honour and the interests of England. But he had never severed the noble lord from the policy of the cabinet; and if that policy were to be continued, as he understood from the queen's speech, he would rather have it administered by the late foreign secretary, whom they all recognized to be able, than by any other person he saw upon the Treasury Bench. The past errors were not personal to Lord Palmerston; they must be attributed to the entire cabinet, and the noble lord should not be treated as the scapegoat. Mr. Disraeli also complained of the manner in which the prime minister had introduced the name of the sovereign into his speech.

"I am bound to say," said he, and here for the first time in the House of Commons we listen to him expressing his views as to the majesty of the Crown, that it should be a real power in the state, and not, as the Whigs wished to make it, merely an ornament. "I am bound to say, that I cannot at this moment recall any analogous occasion in which the name

of the sovereign was so frequently and peculiarly used. Whatever was done at the command of the sovereign was at least done on the responsibility of the noble lord; and though it may be expedient that minutes should be read to this House, which we are informed were drawn up by a personage whose name is rarely introduced in our debates, I must express my astonishment at the narrative of midnight despatches which were the cause, as I understand—though I may have misapprehended the noble lord—of conduct on his part of a very urgent, not to say a precipitate nature. Now, I suppose, that for everything which has been done the noble lord, the first minister, is responsible, and the noble lord, the first minister, is not a man to shrink from his responsibility: I am at a loss, therefore, to comprehend how the noble lord will account for that introduction of Her Majesty's name—that frequent and unnecessary introduction—which has taken place in the debate to-night. As I am one of those who never could have voted for that famous motion in this House, that 'the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished;' *as, in fact, I should be willing to hail as a fact, the converse of that proposition; and as I think it one of the great misfortunes of our time, and one most injurious to public liberty, that the power of the Crown has diminished*, I am not one likely to look with an unnecessary jealousy on the assertion of the prerogative of the Crown. But the noble lord is the eminent representative of a political party that has adopted opinions of a very different character. The noble lord is a member of the party which introduced, as I think, to our disgrace, that resolution upon the journal of the House;* and cer-

tainly, therefore, I am astonished that the noble lord, on an occasion like the present, should have come forward, and, as it seems to me, have shifted from himself a responsibility which, under the circumstances, he should have been the first to adopt."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to criticise the various clauses in the speech from the throne. He did not consider the moment favourable, as the prime minister had stated, for the re-opening of the question of parliamentary reform; but he would consider the proposition of the noble lord when it came before them entirely without prejudice. He complained of the manner in which our colonies had been administered, and which had resulted in another disgracefully-conducted Kaffir war. Then he alluded to the time that had been wasted in the passing of the wretched Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Had it vindicated the outrage which was offered to their sovereign and her kingdom? Had it punished the "insolent aggression?" Had it baffled that great European conspiracy against the realm of England and the Protestant faith? Why, they all knew that it had been treated with a contumely which could not be expressed, and with a derision which it certainly merited! The great cardinal, who had been ordered to quit England, was still within the realm; "and I find him advertised in the newspapers in the exercise of his official duties as the lord cardinal archbishop of Westminster." Why was there no mention of this flagrant violation of the law in the queen's speech? Another grave omission he could not pass over. Why was there no expression of sympathy with the difficulties of the cultivators of the soil? All their difficulties had been occasioned by legislation, and therefore they were bound to consider whether those difficulties could not also be remedied by legislation.

"Have," he said, "as free an exchange of commodities as you please, but take care first that you place the British producer upon terms of equality with those with whom he has to compete; take care that

* It was during the administration of Lord North that the personal influence of the sovereign attained its highest pitch. According to Fox, the king was "his own unadvised minister." At length, in 1780, Mr. Dunning proposed and carried, in the House of Commons, his notorious resolution, affirming "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." Two years afterwards, Lord North, who had been in office from 1770 to 1782, was compelled to resign.

your legislation does not oppress him with burdens which he alone bears, and beneath the weight of which he must inevitably sink." He then quoted the opinions of Mr. M'Culloch that the cultivator of the soil was subjected to unjust taxation which no other class of the community shared, and to injurious restrictions on his industry; and since it was impossible to adjust that taxation with absolute equality or to terminate those restrictions with a due consideration to the revenue, the just and scientific means by which a fair adjustment could be arrived at were by countervailing duties; but, added the political economist, just as these duties would be, the opportunity for applying them had been lost, and the cultivators of the soil, in the present temper of the country, must submit to the injustice which was oppressing them.*

"That," cried Mr. Disraeli, "is the political morality of a political economist. If the data of Mr. M'Culloch be correct, I say the consequence that he draws from them is an immoral consequence; and I say that the legislation that is founded upon them is an immoral legislation. If it be the conviction of parliament that any class of producers is subject to unjust taxation, and is subject to it that another class of the community may be benefited by that taxation, they act immorally in upholding that system. It is confiscation in another guise; it is robbery under the *formulæ* of political economy. Remember what this class is which for the last three or four years has been so severely suffering, and is now so severely suffering. Who are these farmers whom gentlemen opposite seem to hold so light? Why, they are the largest employers of labour in the United Kingdom. The farmers of the United Kingdom are the most numerous and the most important portion of the middle class. I know there may be some of my friends who, remembering the insolence with which they have been treated by a section of the middle

class flushed with unexpected success, may naturally not be indisposed to triumph at the present altered position of the middle class throughout Europe, . . . that after all was only a limited section of the middle-class. The power and prosperity of the middle class are inseparable from the greatness of England [Mr. Disraeli objected to the middle classes only when they inspired and controlled a government, not when they formed a part of it]; and the most numerous portion of it is peculiarly represented on this side of the House. For my part I owe my seat to the middle class; the farmers of England sent me here, and therefore I protest against unequal laws which impair their fortunes." It was the duty of the government to remedy such evils. If the agricultural interest could not be relieved from those injurious restrictions and those unjust taxes, at least they should have that countervailing compensation which was their due on a fair consideration of the subject. He saw around him no very felicitous results of the new system. He saw the cultivators of the soil growing poorer and poorer. He saw a list of bankrupt merchants, and secret societies of amalgamated mechanics. He saw classes arrayed against each other. No political system, he concluded, could be sound which had resulted in circumstances so menacing and so ruinous.

The dismissal of Lord Palmerston was looked upon not only as a great blow to the Liberal cause throughout Europe, but as the collapse of a career from which great things had been expected. The defence of the foreign secretary, very different from his brilliant speech on the Don Pacifico debate, was weak, and consequently made but a poor impression upon the House; it was now fully known that the late minister was disliked by the court; he had played his part badly in the theatre of diplomacy, the curtain had descended amid disapproval, and he was not likely to have another engagement. "There *was* a Palmerston," said Mr. Disraeli in his peculiar tone to

* A Treatise on Taxation and the Funding System, by J. R. M'Culloch, pp. 195-202, Longman's, 1852.

a friend whom he met at the Russian embassy. The ex-minister, however, was not depressed at the prospect of his future. He took his punishment very quietly; he would bide his time until an opportunity would offer itself, and then, he said, he would give "Johnny Russell tit-for-tat."

"I must say," writes Lord Dalling in his chatty biography of Lord Palmerston, "that I never admired him so much as at this crisis. He evidently thought he had been ill-treated; but I never heard him make an unfair and irritable remark, nor did he seem in any wise stunned by the blow he had received, or dismayed by the isolated position in which he stood. I should say that he seemed to consider that he had a quarrel put upon him, which it was his wisest course to close by receiving the fire of his adversary and not returning it. He could not, in fact, have gained a victory against the premier on the ground which Lord John Russell had chosen for the combat, which would not have been more permanently disadvantageous to him than a defeat. The faults of which he had been accused did not touch his own honour, nor that of his country. Let them be admitted, and there was an end of the matter. By and by an occasion would probably arise in which he might choose an advantageous occasion for giving battle, and he was willing to wait calmly for that occasion."

His patience was not put to a severe test. Before, however, he was to taste the sweets of revenge the often agitated question of parliamentary reform was again to come before the House. In the speech from the throne Her Majesty had said, "It appears to me that this is a fitting time for calmly considering whether it may not be advisable to make such amendments in the Act of the last reign relating to the representation of the Commons in parliament, as may be deemed calculated to carry into more complete effect the principles upon which that law is founded." Accordingly, early in the session, February 9, 1852, Lord John Russell rose to move for leave to bring in

"a bill to extend the right of voting for members of parliament, and to amend the laws relating to the representation of the people." Briefly, the result of his measure was to reduce the franchise in counties to twenty pounds rated value, and in boroughs to five pounds rated value; to extend the franchise to all persons, whether in counties or boroughs, who paid direct taxes to the amount of forty shillings a year; and to group with neighbouring towns all boroughs with less than 500 electors. He estimated such boroughs to be sixty-seven in number. Various members on both sides of the House took part in the debate, and it was somewhat late before Mr. Disraeli rose to express his opinion upon the provisions of the new measure.

After a few remarks as to the inconvenience of the bill not being ready to be placed in the hands of members, and as to the advisability of the House to have full time to consider the scheme before the second reading came on, he briefly commented upon the novelties proposed by Lord John Russell. He would reserve further criticism, he said, for another occasion, when the subject was fairly before the House. He, however, congratulated parliamentary reformers on the content with which they had accepted the repast provided for them; the voracity of their appetites seemed to him satisfied with short commons. His impression, in listening to the statement of the noble lord, had been, that there was nothing in it which had any tendency to disturb, he would not say the balance between the two great interests of the country, but he would rather say the adjustment made by the Reform Bill in 1832. He did not use the word balance, because he did not think any such balance existed. He thought the adjustment of 1832 gave a preponderance to the towns and the commercial classes. To that adjustment they bowed. So far as he could discover from the oral statement of the minister, he did not think there was

anything in that new plan which had a serious tendency to disturb it; and therefore, on that ground, as no change would probably be in their favour, he felt considerably relieved. At the same time, he must tell the hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Bright) that he could not at all accept his dogma, that the present adjustment was unfair because a borough like Thetford returned two members, and a city like Manchester returned no greater number.* Throughout the whole of the arguments he had heard on that subject from gentlemen opposite, both here and as reported in other places, a great fallacy was observable, and pervaded all that they brought forward on the subject, as he should be prepared to show at the right time and on the fitting occasion. The hon. gentleman had referred to the cases of Thetford and Manchester, and it was only because he had done so that he entered upon the subject at all now. The inference, founded on the two tests of population and property, that because a borough like Thetford returned two members, therefore Manchester should return the number of members proportionate to its population and property, was altogether erroneous. The inference, indeed, was the other way. It was that such places as Thetford should not return two members, not that Manchester should return more. A paper had just been put into his hands, which had some reference to that part of the subject. It related to North Cheshire. The total population of the county was

217,000 There were two considerable manufacturing towns, and only two, in that great division—Macclesfield, with a population of 33,000, and the too-celebrated Stockport, with a population of upwards of 50,000; together 83,000, which, deducted from the whole population of the northern division of Cheshire, left 134,000. Now, those two towns returned four members, though the county population, which amounted to 130,000, returned only two! Even admitting the tests laid down by the hon. member to be just, which he did not, it could never be inferred from it that Manchester should have eight, ten, or fourteen members, the burden always of the hon. gentleman's argument on that point—but only that Thetford should *not* have two members.

With regard to the second condition, that there should be no attempt to establish the undue preponderance of any particular party, he must reserve his opinion till they had the details before them. When he saw how the government proposed to deal with sixty or seventy boroughs; when he saw what those boroughs were, and how they were to be managed under the new arrangement—then he should better know how to form an opinion. But he should assume now that in 1852, after the experience on these subjects which the House had acquired, any of those not very creditable manœuvres as to the settlement of boundaries which distinguished the first Reform Bill, would not very easily occur. He could not believe that any party in the House, or out of it, would support a minister in any arrangement of the new boroughs, the object of which was to support his own party in parliament: he had that confidence in the increased knowledge both of the House of Commons and the country on those subjects, as to feel that such manœuvres could not be repeated.

He confessed, so far as he could form an opinion, that his impression was that the bill was one of very questionable propriety. The noble lord had on several occasions

* In the course of his speech Mr. Bright made the following remarks:—"The noble lord did not explain, when he said he should not disfranchise these boroughs, whether they were to retain one member or two. He hoped it was determined that they should only have one. Take the cases of Thetford and Harwich. These were two boroughs in which the noble lord might possibly somewhere or other, by taking in neighbouring villages, raise a constituency of 300 or 400 to 1000; but he asked the noble lord, was it consistent even with the opinions he had expressed to-night, much less with the opinions he expressed when introducing his first Reform Bill, to maintain that Harwich—notorious Harwich—and Thetford—notorious Thetford—should each have two members, whilst each of the boroughs of the metropolis, one of them having 85,000 electors, should have only two? . . . In the very next session of parliament the question of the transference of some of the members of some of the small boroughs to larger constituencies, or to new constituencies, would be mooted in that House."

dilated on the wisdom of settling great questions in moments of comparative calm and tranquillity. He agreed with him. He thought it was wise in a statesman if he had a subject of great importance to grapple with, a subject calculated to arouse the passions and affect the interests of great masses of the people, that he should attempt it in moments of tranquillity; but he was bound to deal with it so that the settlement might be—he would not say final, for that was not an epithet suitable to human legislation—but permanent. So far as he could now form an opinion, he could not say that he thought the measure brought forward by the noble lord in that sense a very statesmanlike measure. What was the great object of the £5 franchise? That they should admit the working classes to the exercise of the suffrage. *He had always been the advocate of an industrial suffrage*; but he was not satisfied that that £5 franchise would act in that way. He was not by any means clear that there was no measure better fitted for that purpose, no arrangement more apposite and more calculated to effect that end, than merely lowering the amount on which the suffrage depended.

Still he was not prepared to interpose any obstruction to the bill of the noble lord. He had much hesitation as to the propriety of introducing any measure at all on the present occasion. He had his doubts, too, whether the measure introduced was of that deep and comprehensive character required. He thought the noble lord ought to bear in mind that it was of the utmost importance that a question of that kind should be maturely considered before it was decided on; that all measures for the adjustment of the franchise should be of a permanent character. He thought it would be just as well for hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House that the measure, then introduced by the minister of the crown and supported by them, should be one that would be likely to last. The hon. gentlemen opposite had now had some experience in that matter. They

received with enthusiasm the bill of 1832; they denounced everybody who opposed it, and insisted that it would in every respect answer their purpose; they said nothing less would satisfy them, and nothing more would they accept; yet they had been mistaken. He thought they ought to consider—he would not say with suspicion, but without passion—the proposition of the minister on that occasion. It should be remembered, too, that they had many other important subjects to discuss during the present session; and he warned them not to be diverted in their attention from other great reforms by parliamentary reform. The great body of the nation would not be satisfied if the entire time of the session was occupied with discussions on parliamentary reform. The people out of doors wished the whole question of colonial government to be considered—the people out of doors wished to have the principles of taxation properly established—the people out of doors were anxious to know whether there would be any law reform or not. These were reasons why they should not approach the subject thrown before them with any degree of passion; that they should try to ascertain whether the time really needed such a change as that then proposed; whether that change was required by the nation; and whether the proposition of the government was calculated to satisfy it.

An event not unexpected, but which, when it came, took the political world by surprise, was, however, to interfere with the progress of this the latest development in reform. The opportunity was about to present itself for Lord Palmerston to take his revenge. For some time past a feeling of uneasiness had prevailed as to the condition of England in case, owing to the then turbulent condition of Europe, a war should break out. "I am perfectly willing to believe," said Mr. Disraeli in the debate on the address, "that no danger is at hand, and that the world will continue to be governed by the principles of peace, though we are going to increase our armaments and call out our

militia; but no one can deny that, not only in the country, but throughout Europe, there is a feeling of apprehension." France was a disturbing element. We did not know what would be the next move of the prince-president whose policy was now, in order to render his position more sure, to flatter the vanity and pander to the ambition of his new subjects. It was both said and sung that the devil only knew what he meant. He was our ally, but it was the general impression that he would throw the *entente cordiale* to the winds if it would in any way benefit his purpose. We were advised to believe in the maxim *Fidarsi è bene, ma non fidarsi è meglio*. There was the usual scare of a foreign invasion, and the timorous, and indeed those who were not timorous, bade us look to our national defences, fortify our dockyards, keep our fleet ready to guard the coast, and our regiments at full strength, and have a strong mass of reserves in existence to be drawn upon when necessary. The volunteer system was proposed, and was eagerly embraced by the nation; before the year had closed, every town had its corps of trained civilians ready to bear arms, and, what was more to the point, possessing the knowledge of how to use them. So military and patriotic were the youth of the country that there was almost a feeling of disappointment when all prospect of an invasion seemed abandoned.

As one of the consequences of this warlike spirit, and of the dangers with which it was thought we were menaced, the government considered it prudent to inquire into the state of the militia. When we look upon our militia at the present day—the regiments well officered, the men smart and well drilled, the discipline as severe and exact as in the regular service—and compare it with the militia of "the good old days," when the officers, mostly civilians who had received no military instruction whatever, regarded the whole thing as the farce it really was, and only as an excuse for a month of amusement and pleasant festivities, whilst the men, drawn from the very

scum of the country, were a nuisance and the disgrace of every town in which they took up their quarters, the contrast is indeed striking. A Kaffir war, with its usual complement of military blunders and commissariat shortcomings, was then on our hands; and it became therefore very advisable to report upon the condition of our reserves in case of emergencies.

Accordingly Lord John Russell introduced a Militia Bill (February 20, 1852), which, among other changes, recommended the substitution of a local militia for the regular force. Mr. Disraeli took part in the debate that followed, but his remarks were very brief. The honours of the evening fell to Lord Palmerston, who, amid the cheers of the House, mercilessly criticised the bill. He wished to know whether the measure was to be founded on "the militia" or upon "a local militia." If it were to be founded on a local militia it would be of no use, as a local militia was not liable to be called out except in cases of actual invasion or of an enemy being in force off our coasts. Therefore if they were to have a militia it must be a regular militia, liable to be called out and to serve in any part of the United Kingdom when necessary. He proposed to substitute the word "regular" for the word "local," thus of course altering the whole character of the bill. The House was in favour of the substitution, and after a division the government found itself in a minority of eleven votes. Thereupon Lord John Russell resigned. "I have had my tit for tat with John Russell," writes Lord Palmerston to his brother, "and I turned him out on Friday last." It has been said that the real reason for the resignation of the cabinet was a fear of being defeated on a vote of censure as to the conduct of the Kaffir war, which was on the eve of being moved. "As it is," writes Lord Palmerston, "the late government have gone out on a question, which they have treated as a motion, merely asserting that they had lost the confidence



Engraved by John H. Pott, from a photograph by G. S. Davis.

THE FIRST SYMPOSIUM ON THE HISTORY OF THE
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of the House; whereas, if they had gone out on a defeat upon the motion about the Cape, they would have carried with them the direct censure of the House of Commons."

Our then only comic paper took the matter up, and wrote a ballad upon it. Lord John is made thus to lament:—

- "It was upon a Friday night
My motion I brought on;
When 'twixt leave for the bill and me,
Up started Palmerston!
- "Straight the whole house broke out in cheers,
In spite of his disgrace;
He snubbed our bill, and with a sneer
Proposed his in its place.
- "And when my turn to answer came,
The House was cold as ice;
'The game is done—I've won! I've won!'
Quoth he—and in a trice
- "Out go the whips; M P.'s rush out,
With Hayter and Lord Mark;
And from their whispers soon I see
That things are looking dark.
- "And while the votes are adding up,
We wait; for 'twixt the lip and cup
Full often comes a slip;
Taper look'd blank and sick with fright,
And Tadpole's face in the gas gleam'd white;
From his brow the dew did drip.
In a minority we are,
In spite of Hayter's and Lord Mar-
cus' energetic whip!
- "One after one, their places gone,
With stifled groan and sigh;
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang,
And reproach'd me with his eye.
- "From treasury bench condemned to fly,
Their salaries forego;
Each seem'd to say as he pass'd me by,
'It's all your fault, you know.'"

On the resignation of Lord John Russell, the Earl of Derby was commanded to form an administration. "It was on Saturday," said the incoming prime minister to his brother peers in the upper House, "that I received the, to me, surprising intelligence of the result of the division in the House of Commons, and of the consequent resignation of Her Majesty's ministers. On the evening of that day I had the honour of receiving from Her Majesty a command to

wait on her at the palace at half-past two o'clock on the following day. My lords, I had then to consider not what course it was my interest, but what course it was my public duty, to pursue. I had to weigh deliberately and candidly on the one side all the overwhelming difficulties of the situation in which I was placed—all the awful responsibility of the task which I felt I might be called upon to perform; I had to weigh, on the other side, what appeared to me the still more awful responsibility, if it could be imputed to me that from personal feelings and an unwillingness to take on myself either labour or responsibility, I had left by my act the queen and the country in the present times without an administration, however unworthy it might be. The noble lord opposite [Lord Aberdeen] will excuse me for saying that I saw little prospect of any other administration being speedily formed; and further, that I saw little prospect of advantage from the resignation of the late ministry being speedily followed by their resumption of the reins of government; and I therefore felt that however unequal to the task, however great the difficulties that might stand in the way—difficulties arising from my own position, and from those who agreeing with me in opinion, are still unable to command a majority in the other House of Parliament—still great as all these difficulties were, deliberately weighing and not overlooking them, I felt it my first duty to my sovereign and my country to determine that at this time the country should not be without an administration; and it was not, my lords, without a deep consciousness of the responsibility I was incurring, nor without a thorough conviction of my own inability to perform adequately the duties I was about to undertake, that I at once intimated to Her most Gracious Majesty, on receiving her commands to that effect, my readiness to attempt the task of the formation of a Ministry."

Thus passed into the cold shade of opposition the government of Lord John Russell.

CHAPTER VII.

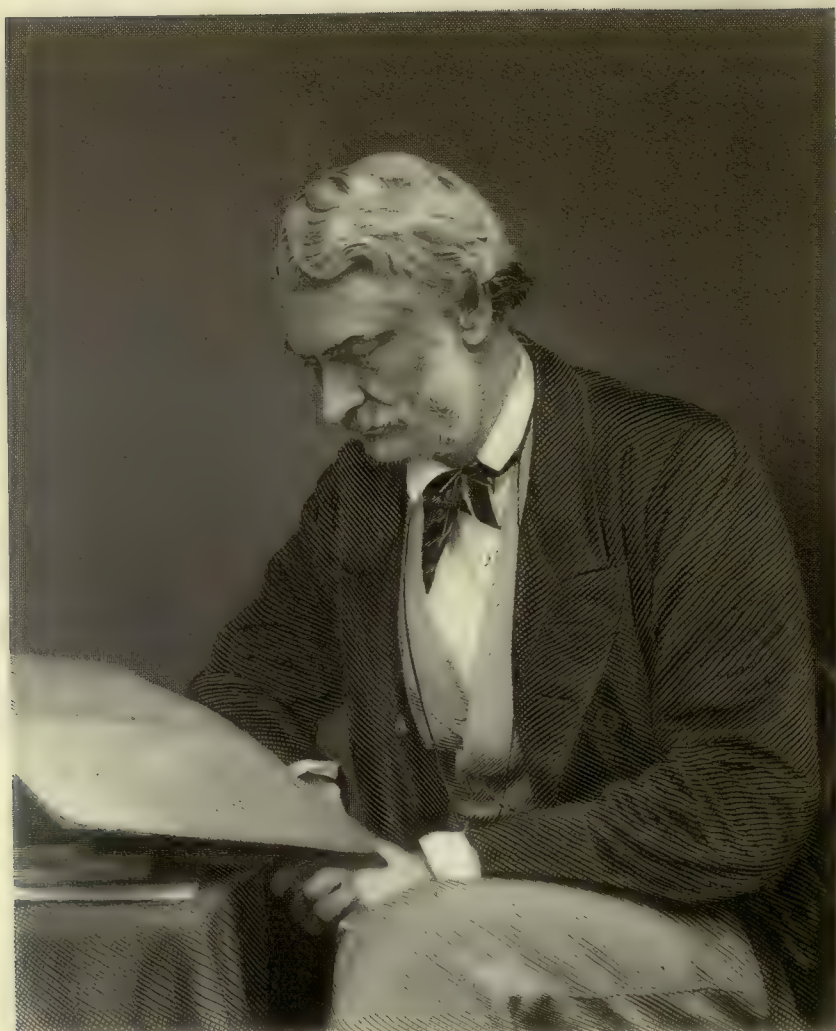
OFFICE.

WITH the exception of its chief and his lieutenant, the cabinet formed by Lord Derby was far from a strong one. It was composed of peers almost unknown twenty miles outside their park gates, and country gentlemen, excellent chairmen of quarter-sessions, but who had never prominently come before the public or had made themselves a name in the House of Commons. It was essentially an administration of untried men. Shortly after the new premier had prepared his list of those to serve under him, the Duke of Wellington, anxious to learn who were to constitute the Tory administration, took the first opportunity, when Lord Derby entered the House of Lords, to ask the names of those who had agreed to hold office. As the prime minister went through the catalogue, the duke, who had of late years become rather deaf and who had never heard before of several of the newly-created ministers, kept up throughout the whole conversation a running query of "who? who?" in the loud tones of a deaf person. The peers opposite, much amused at this incessant interrogation and also at the perplexed air of his Grace as name after name of men he had never met, and of whose political existence he had until then been in total ignorance, was bawled into his ears, at once christened the new cabinet the "who? who? ministry." The nickname was quickly taken up by club idlers and the editors of newspapers, and the Derby administration during the first weeks of its career was never designated by any other title than that conferred on it by Whig wit.

Lord Derby had for many years been one of the brilliant stars in the firmament of the political world. His powers as a par-

liamentary debater were unrivalled, and as Mr. Stanley, there had been few men in the House of Commons who more instinctively detected the flaws in an argument, and were more effective when put up to crush an opponent or lay bare the faults of a measure. The fire of his eloquence, and the dashing onslaughts he was in the habit of making upon the enemy, had gained him the title of the "Rupert of debate." He was a brilliant classic, well read without any affectation of erudition; and when he chose to conquer his carelessness and indolence of temperament, he possessed a grasp over the details of business such as few of the Manchester school could surpass. Conscious of his rank, proud of himself, and naturally of a somewhat haughty disposition, he was not given to pay much attention to the opinions of those with whom he acted, and who were inferior to him in station. They might follow him or they might desert him (he did not care very much which alternative they accepted), but they should not lead him. He held his own views, and he would carry them out; he often arrived at his conclusions after but a hasty and superficial inspection, and not infrequently found them untenable. Mr. Disraeli had said that his lordship had been rightly named the Prince Rupert of debate, since, however brilliant his attack, he generally found on his return that his camp had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

Before being placed at the head of a cabinet, Lord Derby had seen some service in the state. During the early part of his career he had been an advocate of the principles of reform, and under the administration of Lord Grey had held office first as chief secretary for Ireland,



Engraved by G Cook from a Photo. by S A Walker 230 Regent St

RIGHT HON. LORD JOHN MANNERS

and afterwards as secretary of state for the colonies. When the Reform Bill was brought forward he defended its provisions with great warmth and eloquence, and also carried the bill for national education in Ireland. He gave his vote in favour of the emancipation of the West India slaves, and indeed was one of the principal agents to whom the success of the measure was due. But now it was that he severed himself from the Liberal party. The proposal to reduce still further the Irish Church establishment met with his strongest disapproval, and he resigned his seat in the cabinet. In the administration of Sir Robert Peel he held the seals again as colonial minister; but on the "apostacy" of that minister he threw in his fortunes with the Protectionists, and became the leader of the Conservative party. Impatient of control, and irritable under instruction, he yet permitted his able lieutenant to assume an authority over him which no one before had ever exercised.

In the ministry of which Lord Derby was the chief, there were a few names which subsequently attained if not to fame at least to respectable distinction. Lord Malmesbury was foreign secretary; Sir John Pakington was the colonial secretary; Mr. Walpole was at the Home Office; Major Beresford was at the War Office; Mr. Herries, who had been chancellor of the exchequer under Lord Goderich, and who had afterwards been secretary-at-war, presided over the Board of Control; Mr. Henley, then almost unknown, but who afterwards developed into the best representative of the landed interest the country has possessed since the days of Sir William Wyndham, was president of the Board of Trade; Lord John Manners was first commissioner of works; Lord St. Leonards, a sound lawyer but no politician, was lord chancellor; the attorney-general was Sir Frederick Thesiger, afterwards the first Lord Chelmsford; the solicitor-general was Sir Fitzroy Kelly. Last but far from least, since he was the ruling spirit of the cabinet, Mr. Disraeli

was appointed to the post of chancellor of the exchequer; and the charming humour of the pencil and the brush represented him, with three hats upon his head, toiling along Downing Street with an old clothes bag over his shoulder, upon which was labelled "budget."

In this elevation to high office we have another instance of how exceptional was the political career of the late Lord Beaconsfield. Since the development of parliamentary government during the last fifty years the pursuit of politics has become a profession, in which the prizes at its disposal are given, more as the rewards of ability, industry, and experience than as the consequences of lofty station and social combinations. The days are past when a foolish peer had a seat in the cabinet on account of the boroughs in his gift, or when the young man of fashion, favoured by a powerful minister, drew his salary as a vice-president or an under-secretary of state. If we examine the administrations before the Reform Bill of 1832 we shall find that men, at an age when they would now seldom be asked to serve on important committees, then held the seals of high and responsible office. St. John (afterwards Lord Bolingbroke) and Sir Robert Walpole at thirty-two were secretaries-at-war; at twenty-three the second Pitt was chancellor of the exchequer; at thirty-five the Marquis of Rockingham became first lord of the Treasury; Lord Shelburne was president of the Board of Trade at twenty-six; Canning was foreign secretary at six and thirty; at thirty-two Addington was speaker of the House of Commons; and coming down to more modern times we find the first Lord Durham privy seal at six and thirty; Lord Palmerston secretary-at-war at twenty-five; Sir James Graham first lord of the Admiralty at thirty-seven; Sir Robert Peel chief secretary for Ireland at thirty-four; Wellesley governor-general of India at thirty-seven; Lord Normanby lord-lieutenant of Ireland at the same age; Macaulay secretary-at-war before he was

forty, and numerous other instances of men before they had reached their prime holding some of the most important posts under the crown.

This rapid advancement is now no longer regarded with approval by the country. We require those raised to high and responsible office to be men not only of ability, but of long parliamentary experience; and unless these conditions are fulfilled, we decline to place much confidence in the appointments. The mere talent of youth inspires us with no faith, nor do we rate at a high value the mere experience which age seldom fails to afford. We have no objection to the humbler posts in an administration being occupied by youthful genius or untried ability; but we demand that those higher offices which entitle a member to a seat in the cabinet should only be conferred upon those who have *proved* themselves worthy of being intrusted with the interests of the nation. As men on the turf judge of the horses entered for an important race by their past performances at inferior meetings, so on examining the list of a cabinet does the country estimate the value of the ministers constituting it by their past conduct when in an inferior capacity. Every member of a cabinet has invariably served the Crown previously to his appointment within the inner circle of the administration in some more modest post—as a junior lord, or an under-secretary of state, or as the vice-president of some board or another, and the like; and thus both the Crown and the nation have had an opportunity of judging how far the individual is calculated to do justice to the higher appointment. When Mr. Disraeli was called to preside over the finances of the country, he had never held any office—not even the most subordinate—in the state; his appointment is almost the only instance in our history of a politician entering the exclusive arena of the cabinet without having first won his spurs as an official hack. Genius requires no preparatory training; at one bound Mr. Disraeli had

become the leader of a great party; at one bound he had become a cabinet minister.

It would be absurd to say that the appointment of the new chancellor of the exchequer gave universal satisfaction. Mr. Disraeli was, so far as office was concerned, an untried man; he had never made finance his special study; he was brilliant and held original theories on many subjects, and therefore in the eyes of sober business men he was considered dangerous. Most people thought the appointment unwise, whilst many looked upon it as the wildest and most reckless act that Lord Derby could have committed. "He is a 'good orator,'" they cried, alluding to Mr. Disraeli, "a splendid debater, a perfect strategist, and a consummate master, when he chooses, of the art of saying something which means nothing. He created the Protectionists a party, and he therefore should be rewarded by office; but if there be one post in the administration which he should *not* occupy, it is that of chancellor of the exchequer." "It seems," wrote the *Morning Chronicle*—then a liberal organ of some note—(February 24, 1852), "that Lord Derby has had the incredible rashness to make Mr. Disraeli chancellor of the exchequer. Surely it might have been possible to find some less delicate system of machinery than the finances of the country as a subject for such an experiment." "It is a *mauvaise plaisanterie*," said the *Examiner* (February 28), "a plagiarism from *Punch*, a copy of a squib on an abortive attempt last year. The names, with an exception here and there, cannot be read in any society without a laugh; and yet, in reality, it is no laughing matter. For a serious affair there certainly was never anything so comical." Even the *Morning Post*, the journal of the party, was obliged to own that the appointment of Mr. Disraeli came upon the country with surprise. "It cannot be doubted," it wrote, "that such an arrangement was among the least expected of any which it has been our duty to announce." The leading newspaper was more complimentary,

but equally guarded in its comments upon the appointment.* "No one can doubt," said the *Times* (February 24), "that Mr. Disraeli is the man to lead the House of Commons; but he certainly has consulted rather his ambition than his genius in his selection of office. It is very true that he has dived into the depths and flown to the heights of financial theory; but the chancellor of the exchequer has not merely to make profits or elucidate maxims of finance. He has also to learn and comprehend the numerous relations between the commerce and the revenue of the country, to make elaborate financial expositions, and to be prepared with replies on any complicated question of details which convenience or even malice may suggest. In preparing for such tasks Mr. Disraeli will at least work against the grain, and he will possibly find it difficult to be both a wit and a chancellor of the exchequer."

As soon as his appointment had been made out, Mr. Disraeli proceeded to issue his address. He saw that, in the present feeling of the country, to return to the principles of Protection where the necessities of life were concerned was impossible, and therefore, unlike several of his colleagues, he expressed his views as to the future with great caution. As an individual he still maintained his opinions as to free trade, but as a minister it might be necessary for him to change or modify his policy. Trade was brisk; but he believed it was more due to the recent discoveries in the gold fields than to free trade. He saw, as he had predicted, that the farmer was suffering terribly, the sugar interest was crushed, and the shipping trade, from the repeal of the navigation laws, was sorely depressed. He, therefore, resolved

* It has been said that Mr. Disraeli was first appointed to the home office; but that as home secretary it would be his duty to wait in his turn upon the queen, and as Her Majesty at that time had no wish to admit him to this familiarity, the original intention of Lord Derby was not carried out. Upon what authority this statement has been made we know not. The advice given by Sir Robert Walpole as to the study of history may be equally applied to the mass of hostile criticism upon the earlier part of Mr. Disraeli's career—"Do not read it, it is full of lies."

since Protection could not be restored, to do all in his power to give compensation to the three interests which were specially affected by the recent efforts of the legislature. Still, in the address he now issued to his constituents, he expressed himself with much reserve, and indulged only in generalities as to the future policy he should advise. He stated that the queen had been pleased to call him to her privy council and had appointed him chancellor of the exchequer. Therefore, "according to the salutary principle of the constitution,"† he resigned into the hands of his constituents his seat, feeling sure that he would be re-elected. Then he proceeded to the subject-matter of the address.

"The late administration," he said, "fell to pieces from internal dissension, and not from the assault of their opponents; and notwithstanding the obvious difficulties of our position, we have felt that to shrink from encountering them would be to leave the country without a government and Her Majesty without servants. Our first duty will be to provide for the ordinary and current exigencies of the public service; but at no distant period we hope, with the concurrence of the country, to establish a policy in conformity with the principles which in opposition we have felt it our duty to maintain.

"We shall endeavour to terminate that strife of classes which of late years has exercised so pernicious an influence over the welfare of this kingdom; to accomplish those remedial measures which great productive interests, suffering from unequal taxation, have a right to demand from a just government; to cultivate friendly

† By the Act for the Security of the Crown and Succession (6 Anne c. 7), it was enacted (1) that every person holding "any office or place of profit whatsoever under the crown," created since October 25, 1705, or in receipt of a pension during the pleasure of the crown, should be incapacitated from sitting in the House of Commons; and (2) that every member of the House of Commons who accepted any of the previously existing offices under the crown (except a higher commission in the army) should be obliged to vacate his seat, though still eligible for re-election. The Reform Act of 1867 (30 and 31, Vict. c. 102) dispenses with this necessity to seek re-election in the case of a minister who is removed from one office under the crown to another.

relations with all foreign powers and secure honourable peace; to uphold in their spirit, as well as in their form, our political institutions; and to increase the efficiency, as well as maintain the rights of our national and Protestant church.

"An administration formed with these objects, and favourable to progressive improvement in every department of the state, is one which we hope may obtain the support and command the confidence of the community, whose sympathies are the best foundation for a strong administration, while they are the best security for a mild government."

A few days afterwards (March 13), he went down into Buckinghamshire and presented himself for re-election. A Dr. Lee, who, during the earlier years of Mr. Disraeli's representation of the county, went through the farce of posing as a rival candidate without the slightest chance of success, put in his usual appearance, and was as usual speedily disposed of. The chancellor of the exchequer then stood up to address the vast audience that had assembled from all parts of the country to hear him. As soon as the cheers that greeted his presence had subsided, he began his speech. He opened by alluding to the old stories of his enemies—that he had started in life as a Radical, that he had voted for this and then for that, and that 'he could amuse an audience for hours and send them away only wondering what they had been hearing about.' He, however, should not stop to vindicate his career; if nothing could be said against him but what he had done and said twenty years ago, he thought it was some presumption that they had a right to suppose that in the interval he had said and done nothing that could be very easily impugned. Whatever were his indiscretions, they commenced in Buckinghamshire, and Buckinghamshire had permitted him to atone for them. In politics, as in everything else, a man was not the worse for having 'sown his wild oats.' He, however, now promised his audi-

ence, that if they would only listen to him on this occasion, they would not go away "wondering what they had been hearing about," for it would be from no fault of his if they took their departure without a definite idea of what the intentions of the government were.

Then he proceeded to lay before his hearers the programme of the cabinet, which, briefly summed up, signified that since the country generally was in favour of free trade, the ministry would endeavour to substitute compensation for protection. The corn laws had been repealed, without considering the burdens to which the agricultural interest was subject. The national debt had been increased to terminate slavery, and markets had been opened to slave-grown produce, in a manner which even free traders of great celebrity regarded as entirely unjustifiable towards the colonial interest. The navigation laws had been repealed, and British shipping had thus been forced into competition with the shipping of all the world, and the British seaman and the British shipowner had sustained losses of a very onerous and injurious character. "Gentlemen," said Mr. Disraeli, "it is our opinion that as much injustice in the years 1846 to 1849 was done to these three great interests, in which such an immense amount of capital is invested and on which the employment of so much labour depends, justice should be done them. We are not ashamed to say that this is our political creed—that justice should be done to all classes; and if that be true, you will agree with me that justice should be done to the British producer as well as to the British consumer. If we can show—which it is not difficult to do, because all acknowledge it—that there are great classes of producers in this country who are suffering because they are placed in an unequal competition, it is not only our policy as a party, it is our duty as English statesmen, to see that interest placed in its legitimate position."

He then entered into statistics, and

showed that land was improperly burdened to the extent of about £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 a year, or in other words to the extent of a shilling in the pound; whilst at the same time the cultivator of the soil was called upon to enter into unrestricted competition with the cultivators of the soil of all other countries. How could, he asked, the landed interest pay these heavy burdens—burdens which no other class in the community bore? He was in favour, like that great political economist Mr. McCulloch, of a countervailing duty; and he pledged himself to secure for the agricultural interest ample and complete redress. As it now was, the people of England were eating a farmer every night for their supper. It was absurd to suppose that all the commercial prosperity of the present day had merely originated in their permitting free imports to this country to compete with their taxed exports at home. Unquestionably the moment they opened the ports of this country, a great expansion of their foreign trade had taken place. Every Protectionist predicted it, but at the same time they had also said that such expansion would be accompanied with considerable suffering, which would outweigh the interests at home. The stress upon the farmer was foretold, and unquestionably it had occurred.

He admitted with pleasure that the labouring population had not suffered, nay that their condition had even improved; still much of such improvement was due not to free trade, but to the absence of Irish competition caused by "that fatal emigration which has reduced the population of the sister isle by millions." He also owned that the country had not suffered, what they all had predicted it would suffer, from the drain of gold in consequence of free imports. And why? Because the gold mining operations had been so successful that "last year the gold that came from America went through the bank like a sieve." He then concluded by saying that the cabinet had no objection to dissolve

parliament if the country earnestly wished it, but that they would not have the question pressed upon them by their opponents. "Confident myself," he said, "that in taking office we have at least resolved to do our utmost for the advantage of the country, I shall feel that the consciousness of that duty will sustain us under trying exigencies. And, gentlemen, I may say that as the noble lord who is at the head of the administration took Providence to witness in the senate of his country that he was influenced by no personal feeling in occupying the post of danger which he now fills, I will also express my hope that, whatever may be the fate of the government, when we leave office there will at least be among all temperate and impartial men a sense that, however humble may have been our efforts, we have endeavoured to do our duty to our country, our sovereign, and our God."

The House of Commons met, after its brief adjournment, March 12, 1852. The chancellor of the exchequer had scarcely taken his seat upon the Treasury bench before Mr. Villiers, of corn-law fame, rose up to catechise the government as to their future policy. On the accession of a Conservative cabinet to power much alarm was felt by a certain section of the country. It was feared that legislation would retrace its steps, and that Protection would oust free trade from the markets. Lord Derby, on the first resignation of the Russell ministry, had openly avowed his intention, should he ever undertake the task of forming an administration, of returning to the principles of Protection. Several of his colleagues in their election addresses had expressed themselves as hostile to the repeal of the corn laws, and had spoken with no uncertain voice as to the course they should recommend for the relief of the landed interest. The Opposition was alarmed. Anti-corn law meetings were held all over the country to combat the supposed retrogressive policy of the Tory party; a coalition had been effected between

the Whigs and the Peelites on the basis of supporting free trade; and since the new government were in favour of Protection, and the present parliament had been returned ostensibly to pass free-trade measures, every effort was to be made to force the Derby cabinet to dissolve the Houses and appeal to the country. It was the confident opinion of the Whigs and the Peelites that a general election would place the Tories in a most palpable minority.

Mr. Villiers embodied the current gossip of the clubs and the journals in the questions he put to the leader of the House of Commons. He wished, he said, to come to a clear understanding with respect to the intentions of Her Majesty's ministers. What was the principle or the policy on which the government proposed to regulate the foreign commerce of the country, and more especially that branch of it which was engaged in the supply of food for the people? A Protectionist party was in possession of the government; what was that Protectionist government going to do for the cause of Protection? In what manner was the chancellor of the exchequer about to establish that policy with which he had been identified in opposition? Was the tenant farmer to have the 5s. fixed duty which had been promised him at the hustings—a duty by which the farmer would get only 2s. on a quarter of wheat, whilst it would enable the landlord to come down upon him and say, "I have got you back Protection; you must now return me the ten per cent. I abated off your rent." Was this to be? He begged the chancellor of the exchequer to come forward and make an open avowal of the intentions of the government on the subject of their policy with respect to the foreign commerce of the country. The nation wanted no change of policy; it wanted no dissolution, no disturbance or struggle of any kind. All it wanted was to be allowed to remain in its present peaceful and prosperous condition, and for that nothing was required but a declaration on the part of the cabinet

that it had no intention to disturb the policy of free trade.

Thus solemnly adjured, Mr. Disraeli rose up to reply. He begged to assure the House, in spite of the superior information of Mr. Villiers, who not only knew that corn was to be taxed, but the exact amount of the tax, and the exact benefit that would arise from the impost, that the government had no intention of introducing any scheme of commercial or fiscal legislation before the dissolution of parliament, in order that the principle of Protection might be submitted to the deliberate judgment of the electors. Ministers intended to do nothing of the kind. They considered that a very great injustice had been done to the agricultural and other interests by the change which had taken place in 1846, and subsequently in 1847, 1848, and 1849, and consequently they were extremely desirous, for the benefit of all classes of the community, that that injustice should be redressed. It would, therefore, be their duty to consider the condition of the agricultural interest, and to propose such measures as were best calculated to remove the grievances under which it laboured. Ministers were, however, not pledged to any specific measure; they reserved to themselves the right of adopting what expedient they considered the most efficacious for the object they had in view. Other matters beside the agricultural interest would also engage their attention. They intended to bring before the House the question of chancery reform, the disfranchisement of St. Albans, and the distribution of the forfeited seats, and measures for the internal defence of the country. He was not bound, said Mr. Disraeli, to have answered the queries of Mr. Villiers with such frankness, and he hoped that gentleman would be satisfied with the course the government intended to pursue.

Then he proceeded to turn the tables upon his assailants. As the Opposition had very candidly inquired what were the principles on which the present administration was formed, he, on behalf of the

ministry, would likewise ask what were the principles on which the Opposition was formed. The Opposition had recently been reconstructed; it was now composed not only of its original Whig element, but the Peelites, led by Sir James Graham, had joined it; and acting with it were also the Free-traders led by Mr. Cobden. On what principle was the new Opposition founded? Was it the principle of Papal supremacy, or of Protestant ascendancy? Was it the principle of household suffrage, or of electoral groups? Was it the principle of Mr. Cobden, that free trade was the panacea for all the evils of states, or was it a principle framed in deference to the sentiments of Lord John Russell, that free trade was a great exaggeration? He thought these questions should be as frankly answered as the questions which had been pressed upon the government. He knew the difficulties before him, but he did not despair of baffling the manœuvres of faction. Then he took his seat.

A keen debate ensued. Lord John Russell complained that the ministers, being in a minority, did not express their intention of dissolving parliament and appealing to the country. Mr. Herries proved, from statistics in his hand, that the repeal of the navigation laws had been injurious to British shipping. Sir James Graham refuted the figures of Mr. Herries, and declared that, according to the constitutional precedents of Mr. Pitt in 1784, of Earl Grey in 1831, and of Lord John Russell in 1841, the government being in a minority, should speedily dissolve, and not attempt to carry through the present parliament the measures they proposed.*

* "Since the establishment of parliamentary government," writes Earl Grey, "the ordinary description of the British constitution, as one in which the executive power belongs exclusively to the crown, while the power of legislation is vested jointly in the sovereign and the two Houses of Parliament, has ceased to be correct, unless it be understood in a legal and technical sense. It is the distinguishing feature of parliamentary government that it requires the powers belonging to the crown to be exercised through ministers, who are held responsible for the manner in which they are used, who are expected to be members of the two Houses of Parliament, the proceedings of which they must be able generally to guide, and who are considered entitled to hold their offices

Most of the more prominent members on both sides of the House took part in the debate. The result of the discussion was, from the Conservative point of view, that the government did not intend to reverse a free-trade policy, but that they thought that that policy should be so altered and modified as not to press urgently upon one class while benefiting another. The Opposition was, however, dissatisfied with the various statements, which, it said, had elucidated nothing. Sir Alexander Cockburn summed up the sentiments of his party in a few words. "What was the meaning of the government?" he asked. "Did the modification of the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer mean the imposition of duties and taxes upon the food of the people? It was essential that the people should understand that there was a policy by which the government meant to stand or fall, or whether they merely proposed to stand the chance of the next election on the principle of 'Heads I win: tails you lose.'"

A few evenings (March 19) after the debate, the question was put point-blank by Lord John Russell to Mr. Disraeli,

only while they possess the confidence of parliament, and more especially of the House of Commons." Constitutional etiquette, however, demands that, on ministers coming into office, no factious opposition should be directed against them until after proof of gross incapacity. On the resignation of the Russell cabinet, Lord John had openly declared that a dissolution of parliament was not expedient; and yet, within a fortnight of having made that statement, he was badgering Mr. Disraeli because he did not dissolve! The cases alluded to by Sir James Graham are these:—In 1784 Mr. Pitt, being in a parliamentary minority, said, "Only give me permission to pass the Mutiny Bill, and the House shall be dissolved forthwith." In 1831 Lord Grey was beaten upon the Reform Bill by George Gascoigne, and he at once tendered his resignation, unless the king were pleased to dissolve the parliament. In 1841 the Russell government was defeated on the vote of want of confidence carried by Sir Robert Peel. Sir Robert, therefore, recommended Lord John to dissolve parliament with the least possible delay, and call a new parliament together immediately. These cases were, however, not parallel to the present situation. In 1831 and 1841 the ministers were beaten in parliament by a House of Commons of their own convening. The Derby government was called to power in a House of Commons assembled by the late government, and only brought into power because the late government acknowledged themselves unable to carry on the affairs of the country. The Conservatives, therefore, thought they should be neglecting their duty if they did not try to carry on the business of the government until the sense of the country could be taken upon certain grave questions.

whether the ministry, being in an acknowledged minority, "are prepared to advise the crown to dissolve the present parliament and to summon a new one with the least possible delay consistent with a due regard to the public interest in reference to those measures which are of urgent and immediate importance?" The chancellor of the exchequer at once rose and stated that Lord John had addressed an unprecedented question to Her Majesty's government. "I shall, however," said Mr. Disraeli, "reply to the noble lord. I think it is highly unconstitutional and most impolitic that Her Majesty's government should pledge themselves to advise Her Majesty to dissolve parliament at a stated and specific period. The noble lord must feel that circumstances might suddenly arise which would render the fulfilment of such a pledge not only injurious, but perhaps even impracticable. At the same time I have no hesitation in saying that it is the intention of Her Majesty's government to advise Her Majesty to dissolve this parliament so soon as those necessary measures have been passed—I should rather say, so soon as those measures have been passed which are necessary for the service of Her Majesty and the security and good government of her realm. I need only say further, that it is our wish and our intention to meet the new parliament that will be elected, so that the decision of the new parliament may be taken upon the question of confidence in the present administration, and upon the measures which they will find it their duty, under those circumstances, to propose in the course of the present year."

Shortly after this announcement the question of reform again came before the House, and the chancellor of the exchequer, as was his custom whenever the elective franchise was discussed, made a long speech. The irrepressible Mr. Hume had requested leave to bring in a bill to amend the national representation by extending the elective franchise so that every man of full age who had been the resident occupier

of a house or part of a house, as a lodger, for a year, and had been duly rated, should be registered as an elector, and be entitled to vote for a representative in parliament. At the same time he proposed the ballot, triennial parliaments, and that the proportion of representatives should be made more consistent with the amount of population and property. Mr. Disraeli began by criticising the last proposition of Mr. Hume, since it was, he said, the most interesting. He denied the truth of that very common but very inaccurate statement, that the proportion of representatives *was* unfairly arranged in favour of territorial influence. It was said that the proportion of representatives was so arranged by the present system that the town populations were not fairly represented in the English constitution and in the House of Commons. Such an assertion was untrue. He would deal with facts. Take North Cheshire for example. In North Cheshire they had only two towns, and both of great manufacturing importance—Macclesfield and Stockport. The total population of the county was 249,000; the total population of the two towns he had just named was 93,000. There remained, therefore, as the difference between the two, 156,000 for the numbers of the country population. But while the two towns, with a population of 93,000, returned four members to parliament, the rural constituency, with a population of 156,000, returned no more than two members. Take again the case of South Cheshire, in which there was only one town of note, that of Chester. The population of the county was 206,000, and the population of the town of Chester 28,000, leaving 178,000 of the population of that county who were not represented, except by the county members. The town of Chester, with its population of 28,000, returned two members, while the county constituency of 178,000 returned only the same number. He would instance other great manufacturing counties. He would take the case of South Derbyshire, where there was only one considerable

town. The population of South Derbyshire was 166,000, and that of the town of Derby a little exceeded 40,000, leaving 125,000 of rural population. That population of 40,000 returned two members, and the rural population of 125,000 returned only the same number. Take North Durham. That district of the county contained the important towns of Durham, Gateshead, South Shields, and Sunderland. The entire population of North Durham was 272,000, including both the town population and the county population; and it presented this interesting fact, that while the population of the towns was in amount exactly the same as the county population, yet the 136,000 of the great commercial and manufacturing towns he had named were represented by six members, while the county population of 136,000—the other moiety of North Durham—were only represented by two members. He might still pursue the subject. Take the important county of Kent. West Kent had a population of 400,000. It contained four great towns—Chatham, Greenwich, Maidstone, and Rochester, one of those towns having a population of 100,000. The population of the towns was 169,000, and the remaining rural population was 228,000; yet the urban population of 169,000 returned seven members to parliament, while the 228,000 only returned the two members for West Kent. And examination into the cases of North and South Lancashire, East Norfolk, and the East and West Riding, presented similar results.

"Year after year," said Mr. Disraeli, "we have been told of the monstrous injustice of the distribution of the present electoral system—that our representative system is favourable to territorial influences, and that artificial means have been devised of giving preponderance to the landed interest. But we never heard a single word of the remarkable circumstances which I have just adduced. We have been furnished with many striking contrasts between the number of representatives returned by the great

manufacturing towns in South Lancashire, and by the smaller boroughs in the south of England; but no parliamentary reformer has yet condescended to favour the House with the results of a more extended research, which would at least have allowed us to bring to the discussion of this subject more extensive views, and perhaps a more temperate spirit."

Having examined the subject so far, continued Mr. Disraeli, he must confess he had arrived at a different conclusion from that of Mr. Hume. He thought that his statistics, and the statistics of his school, were founded upon partial instances, and supported by fantastic combinations, which were calculated to convey to the country erroneous impressions—impressions not at all justified even by that gentleman's own data. All the data upon which Mr. Hume had relied appeared to him illusory; and as the facts to which he, the chancellor of the exchequer, had appealed were open to all, and might be found in the books in the library of that House, and in other equally accessible and authentic documents, he should be surprised indeed to find Mr. Hume maintaining his position, that in the distribution of the representation the town population, as contradistinguished from and compared with that of the country, had not been fairly and justly treated in the present electoral system. It appeared to him that that was a position that could no longer be supported.

With regard to the proposals of triennial parliaments and vote by ballot, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, he would state what he had always said—he did not object to them, but he saw no necessity to adopt them. It would be a change, and a change, unless for the better, was seldom a wise proceeding. Nor did he see how the ballot could be established. If they had the ballot with a limited constituency, they committed a greater injustice upon the unenfranchised classes; and if they had universal suffrage, they came to a new constitution—"a constitution," cried Mr.

Disraeli, "commonly called the Sovereignty of the People; you came to that constitution, in short, so much spoken of, so often panegyricized by the reforming and liberal members of this House—the constitution of America. But the sovereignty of the people is not the constitution of England; for wisely modified as that monarchy may be, the constitution of England is the sovereignty of Queen Victoria."

But it had been alleged that vote by ballot would put an end to all bribery and corruption. Was that so? He had papers in his hand touching elections in the United States, where the ballot was in all its glory. Yet those papers stated that so alarming was the increase of bribery that had taken place in the elections for the state of New York, that it demanded the serious attention of the legislature. This was the way he read how persons were treated at the last election in that pattern America, and under the beneficial influence of the ballot:—"Individuals were not merely beaten from the polls, but they were knocked down, beaten, and stabbed when proceeding about their ordinary occupations in open day, in distant parts of the city. The police appeared to have been utterly inefficient, and the 100,000 citizen soldiers, of whom the New York papers boasted so much, were content to remain at home while a few gangs of ruffians commanded all the approaches to the polling-booths, and in one instance destroyed the ballot-box." It was idle to suppose that open voting or vote by ballot could check corruption; it was a question of morality, not of political discipline. "I believe," said Mr. Disraeli, "it is a growing conviction among Englishmen that corruption is the consequence, not of one form of voting or of another, but of men being properly or improperly brought up. You may pass laws ostensibly to prevent corruption in countries where voting is secret, as well as in countries where voting is open; but corruption cannot be stopped by acts of parliament; it can only be stopped by elevating the tone

of the community, and making men ashamed of the thing itself. You must seek for an antidote to corruption in that direction, and not in the newfangled systems of election. I say, further, that the tone of the community in which we live has become more elevated in this respect. Every successive quarter of a century shows an improvement. No man who knows anything of the tone of public life a hundred years ago, can hesitate to admit that corruption then ascended much higher in society than it does at present. You have driven corruption from the higher classes. In proportion as education and opinion extended among the gentry, men became purer; and when the same influences come into equal operation among the humbler classes, it will be recognized that it is for the interest of all classes that bribery should disappear."

In conclusion, he dealt with an assertion which Mr. Bright and the rest of the Manchester school were constantly in the habit of making—an assertion out of which they derived considerable capital when addressing the ignorant portion of their constituents "Is the system to be endured," cried the Manchester politicians, "in which only one in seven of the adult population of this country enjoys the franchise?" Mr. Disraeli then entered into statistics compiled from the census of 1841 and the electoral return of 1842-43, clearly proving that instead of one in seven of the adult population enjoying the franchise, it was, as a matter of fact, nearly one in *three*! "What a difference," he laughed, "from the statements made at Manchester and at Leeds! From those of reform associations at Liverpool or anywhere else! What a difference from the statements made in pamphlets! What a difference from the statements of those erratic orators who, during the recess, have astonished the world! Why, instead of one in seven, it is absolutely little more than half what you say, even including 1,500,000 of labourers, whom not one of you have unequivocally proposed to enfranchise."

Mr. Disraeli therefore considered the

propositions now before the House crude, false, and based on grave statistical errors. Neither he nor his party was opposed to reform. The Conservatives did not consider an extension of the franchise as synonymous with the extension of democratic power. It did not follow, because they refused to listen to propositions of the kind now before them, that they as a party were opposed to all reform. No; the contrary was the fact. "But I will tell the hon. gentleman," said Mr. Disraeli, looking at Mr. Hume, "what we are opposed to—we are adverse to all crude and unnecessary proposals founded on such erroneous calculations as the present. I tell him that if any project on this or any other subject is brought forward, I hope it will be founded on more accurate data than the one before us. What we are opposed to is tampering with the depositary of political power—to constant shifting and changing of the depositary of political power—as the most injurious thing to a country that can be conceived. You may talk of tampering with the currency, and there are few things worse; but that which is worse is, tampering with the constituency of England. If there is to be a change, let it be a change called for by pure necessity, and one which is calculated to give general—I will not say final—but general and permanent satisfaction. I ask, is the proposition of the hon. member for Montrose—the whole foundation of which I have shown to be utterly fallacious—is that a proposition calculated to give general and permanent satisfaction? . . . We cannot sanction the proposition of the hon. gentleman or his friends. And may we not flatter ourselves that after the debate of this night, he will reconsider these things—that he will investigate them—that he will calmly consider the important information from the other side of the Atlantic which I have given him—and that next year, with a health, spirit, and energy which I hope he will long enjoy, we may find him coming forward more temperate

in his views, and more careful in his statements? Till we have propositions of a different character brought forward, I shall stand by the settlement made in 1832; not because it was a settlement made for our party interests—for, on the contrary, it was levelled against those supposed interests; but the good sense of the country has exercised a remedial influence over the devices of rival factions, and under that settlement of 1832 the country has on the whole, in my opinion, been well governed. At any rate, it is not what is styled the Liberal party which should dispute that position. There is not a great question, which during the last twenty years has enlisted a preponderating amount of popular sympathy out of doors, which this House has not adopted and carried; and though I may think that in more than one instance great subjects have thus been dealt with in an unwise and precipitate spirit, that should be no cause of censure with hon. gentlemen opposite. Until, therefore, they can succeed in showing that this country has of late years been generally misgoverned—and that would be a condemnation of their whole course—and until they are prepared to substitute for the existing House of Commons a far more clear and coherent scheme than any they have yet offered, I must uphold an arrangement, which, though conceived in no friendly spirit to the Tory party, is one which has not proved hostile to the national institutions—institutions which, I believe, to be necessary not only to the greatness of the country, but to the freedom of the people." These arguments, which Lord John Russell admitted had been gone through with "very great ability," carried the day. On the House dividing, the motion of Mr. Hume was rejected by a majority of 155.

The government were to score a still greater victory. The change of a Russell cabinet into a Derby cabinet had made no difference in the feeling of the nation as to the imperfect state of the internal defences of the country. With France it was true

we were then at peace; but every day events proved that Louis Napoleon was not only a bold man, but an unscrupulous man, who would not hesitate to resort to the wildest proceedings if by them he pandered to the vanity of his new subjects, or could render his tenure of power more secure. In the clubs, in drawing rooms, on provincial exchanges, the one subject upon which all men agreed was the possibility of England being invaded by a foreign enemy, and that enemy our old foe, who was burning to revenge Waterloo. It was said that within twenty miles of our coast were 500,000 soldiers, who, thanks to the application of steam to the purposes of marine, could effect a speedy landing upon our shores. Even the first Napoleon, it was nervously argued, wanted but the command of the channel for a brief twenty-four hours, to see his 60,000 men, then under canvas at Boulogne, marching through Sussex and Kent straight upon London; and now, through the agencies of the screw and the paddle, but a fifth of that time would be sufficient to see the blue coats and red trousers of the French soldiery in our midst. "Only conceive," cried Mr. Roebuck, then preparing for his part as the dog "Tear 'em," "only conceive what would be the consequence, not merely to England, but to mankind at large, of the occupation of London but for twelve hours by an invading force. Don't tell me this is not likely to happen. Let me call to your recollection that London is the only capital in Europe in which French armies have not planted themselves. Those armies have roamed through Europe, checked only first by frost, and secondly by England; and let the House be well assured that France has not forgotten this latter check, but is, on the contrary, now more than ever eager to have her revenge. Yes! there is danger, and great danger, ay, and immediate danger; and speaking not as an individual, but as a man interested in the destinies of humanity, as a friend of the people, I call upon the parliament to strengthen

England, not for the purpose of aggressive warfare, but of national defence."

In this appeal Mr. Roebuck rightly felt the pulse of the country. Every one—save the cheese-parers and the abject traders who had studied pusillanimity as a virtue behind the counters of Manchester—was in favour of the maxim, "If you wish for peace, prepare for war." It was all very well to talk of the spirit of England; but of what avail would such spirit be against a disciplined and aggressive foe? "Unorganized, undisciplined, without systematic subordination established and well understood," said the Duke of Wellington, "this spirit opposed to the fire of musketry and cannon, and to sabres and bayonets of disciplined troops, would only expose those animated by such spirit to confusion and destruction." What was wanted was a practised and capable force to be held in reserve in case of emergency. The Whigs had brought in a bill to amend the laws relating to the local militia, which political reverses had now caused them to abandon; the Tories would therefore be greatly to blame if, on an occasion like the present, they were to ignore the defenceless condition of the country. Accordingly towards the end of March Mr. Walpole was intrusted with the task of carrying through the House of Commons a bill to "amend and consolidate the laws respecting the militia."

The speech in which he introduced his measure was temperate and practical. He did not think, he said, that the country was menaced with any actual and immediate danger; but, looking to the elements of anarchy and confusion in Europe, it was certainly necessary that England ought in her means of defence at least, whatever might be her means of attack, to be placed on an equal footing with other nations. Were they, or were they not, in such a state of defence as the inhabitants of a great country like theirs ought to be? The answer was not a difficult one. They had, it was true, a large army; but that army was not a quarter of

the army of Russia, not half the army of Prussia, not a third of the army of France, and very little more than the army of Belgium; and yet they had to defend an empire comprising one-sixth of the population and one-eighth of the surface of the habitable globe. Their troops were consequently scattered over the whole world. In case of sudden invasion or incursion, what was the force which they could bring to bear upon the south coast of England? He replied that, even by leaving the rest of the country deprived of military force, they could not bring to bear upon any one point 25,000 men. He did not forget the navy. It was said that they had ships enough to cover the whole of the south coast; but if that were true, had they men enough to man them? and if they had ships enough, would the House vote the money to enable the government to put them in commission? Besides, in a case of invasion a fleet was rarely serviceable unless aided by a covering force by land. He proposed, therefore, to have recourse to their national militia; it was a force familiar to the country, it had done good service in the past, and from it they could recruit the regular army. The objects of the measure he now brought before the House were to create an additional force of 80,000 men, to be permanently established for the defence of the kingdom. This force was to be raised by means of bounties—say £3 or £4—and the period of training and drilling was to be twenty-one days, with a power to the Crown to extend such period, in cases of necessity, to fifty-six days.

So little was this militia bill a party act, that its provisions were more or less cordially approved of by the leading members on both sides of the House. There was, however, one conspicuous exception. In all matters not connected with the development of commerce Mr. Cobden held the short-sighted views of the culpably thrifty and mean-spirited tradesman. Every proceeding that tended to keep the shop open and fill it with

wares, he warmly approved of; but no sooner was it a question of expending anything upon the purchase of iron shutters, or upon the increase of the patrol for the better protection of the warehouse, than he became acrid and miserly, noisily asserting that there were no thieves about, nor any probability of a riot. On this occasion of the militia bill he was very true to the teaching of his contemptible philosophy. He did not believe in the possibility of England being invaded; and if she were, of what use, he asked, would such a force be as the militia? "I can't treat the thing as serious," he cried; "it just seems to me to be this, that somebody wants to create soldiers; that lords-lieutenant want patronage and fuss; that somebody else seeks amusement with red coats; and I do not believe that anybody in this country seriously entertains the fear of an invasion by France." The French, he continued, were a commercial people, second only to ourselves as a manufacturing nation, and they had something far better to do than to make a raid upon England. Instead of increasing our army, we ought to reduce it. He was satisfied with the defences of the nation; why, therefore, was he to be taxed in order that the militia should be increased? It was absurd to say that the country was in danger; he did not care for the opinions of naval and military officers and such people; the Marylebone vestry had declared that the country was not in danger, and that was sufficient for him. [What would Mr. Cobden have thought if the English farmer had argued in some such fashion: He, Bill Hodges, was quite satisfied with the duty on corn, why should he be harshly taxed in order that the corn laws should be repealed? He did not care for the opinions of economists, leaguers, and such folk; the farmers' ordinary at the "Magpie and Stump" had declared that the corn laws were necessary for the landed interest, and that was sufficient for him!] It was the custom of the Treasury bench, said Mr.

Cobden, allowing his miserable economy to get the better of his common sense, to chatter about the paucity of the services, yet the truth was they had more men in them than were required. Bring the troops home from the colonies, he suggested, and disband them; order the ships home from their stations and burn them to the water's edge, provided France would do the same; then taxation could be reduced, then the country could be happy, prosperous, and contented. He saw no reason for this increase of their armaments; and as he considered the bill a wanton act, he should oppose the measure at every stage. Mr. Bright, of course, followed suit. Comic satire has represented Mr. Bright as a "roaring bull," making the welkin of vested interests ring with his deep-mouthed threatening tones. At this time of his political career, however, his roar was little more than the echo of the eloquence of the great apostle of free-trade; indeed, Mr. Bright so admired Mr. Cobden as scarcely to be capable of expressing an independent opinion;* satire would therefore have been more true to its art if it had described the then representative of Manchester as a spaniel instead of as a member of the bovine herd.

Mr. Disraeli made a short speech upon the first reading of the bill, and then more in refutation of Mr. Cobden's unpatriotic arguments than in support of the measure itself. He would not attempt, he said sarcastically, to answer Mr. Cobden, who had made one of those agreeable speeches which he always listened to with pleasure. Mr. Cobden was not merely against the militia, but against all defence—against the line, the household troops, the artillery, and the cavalry; and his arguments proceeded on the assumption that in the present state of the world no country need defend itself. The chancellor of the exchequer could not give his adhesion to

those opinions. There were features in the present political arrangements of the world which forbade him to believe that the reign of peace was to be ushered in. So long as he found the strongest places in the possession of the weakest powers, so long as he observed that throughout Europe and Asia the richest countries were under the dominion of the poorest sovereigns, he felt that that was a state of things which would lead no doubt hereafter, he hoped not in his own time, to very great changes which could not, he believed, be effected by any other agency than war. It was the duty, therefore, of a country like England to be prepared for any emergency that might arise.

The craven counsels of Mr. Cobden and his school did not bear much fruit. On the second reading of the bill the House divided—ayes, 315; noes, 165; majority, 150. The royal assent was given to the bill June 30, 1852.

During the first weeks of his tenure of office Mr. Disraeli was deeply immersed in business. In addition to the heavy work involved in the preparation of his first financial statement before a keenly critical audience, scarcely a night passed without him being called upon to make some reply, which partook more or less of the nature of a speech. Now it was upon a question of supply, then upon some railway extension, then upon the hop duty, or the import duties upon wine, or the paper duty, or the Frome Vicarage case, or the corrupt practices at elections, or he had to explain the clauses contained in a private bill which the government either opposed or supported. Silence and repose were denied him. He had hoped that the defeat of Mr. Hume would have restrained the activity of the Reformers, and that they would have been content to leave the bill of 1832 alone until they were more united as to the amendments they proposed to effect. He was soon undeceived. Only a few days after the rejection of Mr. Hume's motion, Mr. Locke-King came forward to do battle,

* It is true that Mr. Bright called the Derby cabinet a "confederated imposture," but, as Mr. Disraeli had some years before stigmatized the government of Sir Robert Peel as an "organized hypocrisy," the originality of the remark is perhaps open to dispute.

ever-faithful to his old love, the county franchise. He begged leave, April 27, 1852, to bring in a bill to make the franchise, and procedure at elections in England and Wales, the same as in the boroughs, by giving the right of voting to all occupiers of tenements of the annual value of ten pounds; the time of taking the poll to be limited to one day, and the time of proceeding to election to be limited to eight days. It was the same bill as he had introduced the year before, with the addition as to polling places and the duration of elections, and among the chief supporters of the innovation were Mr. Hume and Mr. Bright.

The chancellor of the exchequer gave the motion his unqualified opposition. He objected to it because it was partial, and he also considered that the lax system, session after session, of tampering with the constitution, now of attempting to alter the constituencies of the towns and then of seeking to add to or adjust the constituencies of counties, was mischievous, and could only lead to conclusions which would be unsatisfactory. He had also another objection to the bill. He had often said, and it was the expression of a deep and sincere conviction on his part, that he thought in the construction of that memorable law, the Reform Act of 1832, there was a very great deficiency—which consisted in a want of *due consideration of the rights of the working classes to the franchise*. And if there were that great deficiency in their system of representation, he assuredly could not understand how that measure, or the other measures on the same subject which had been so frequently proposed, were at all to meet the deficiency. Under their old system, by the suffrages of the freemen, the political rights of the labourers were acknowledged by the constitution. They virtually destroyed those rights. He was aware, of course, that the rights of the then possessors were reserved. But the fountains which supplied that constituency were destroyed; and, in fact, they virtually ter-

minated the political rights of labour with the class of freemen they destroyed. *He traced much of the discontent in the country, which at times had been painfully felt, with regard to the Reform Act of 1832, to the omission to which he had adverted.* Yet, what had been the remedy which had been offered by those who arrogated to themselves the sole privilege of representing and championing the rights of the working classes? They came forward and proposed a large extension of the suffrage, virtually universal suffrage; their remedy was to throw the whole power of the country into the hands of a mere class. Instead of securing a constituency which gave to property all the rights of property, which gave to labour all the rights of labour, which cherished, in short, the existence of those various classes, the recognition, the legal and political recognition, of whose interests had, he believed, been one of the main causes of the flourishing condition of the country, and of the duration of its order—both social and political—they proposed, as a remedy, a measure which essentially was a measure of class legislation, because they proposed to give political authority to a class so numerous that it would overwhelm all other classes, and entirely change the constitution of the country. To such a change he was opposed, as hurtful to the condition and character of the nation.

Still, continued Mr. Disraeli, that was no reason why they might not consider whether an industrial franchise might not be invented which would give satisfaction to those who claimed to be represented in the legislation of the country. That was a question which deserved the grave consideration of any man responsible for the good government of the country. On the part of himself, and on the part of his colleagues—he had said it before, and he repeated it now, in order that their opinions might not be misunderstood—he stated that they did not necessarily associate an extension of the franchise with the

extension of democratic power. If he could see any measure brought forward—well matured, conceived, not in political passion, *but with a sincere desire of giving to deserving artisans the exercise of the suffrage in a manner* consistent with the maintenance of those institutions the preservation of which he believed were as much for the interest of those artisans as they were for the interests of any other class of the country—he would give, and so would those with whom he acted, to such a proposition a dispassionate and kind consideration. But the motion of Mr. Locke-King was not of that class; and until some measure was brought forward which, as he thought, met the difficulties of the case, he must take his stand upon the settlement which existed—not from any superstitious reverence for that settlement, but because he was opposed to year after year tampering with the constitution of the country—a tampering which he was convinced was the source of political weakness and of national debility.

Let no one suppose, said Mr. Disraeli, that there was, on the part of the present government, any bigoted adherence to the forms then existing. The present government had only one object, an object which he sincerely believed was that of all the members of the House, the good government of the country. But they desired to see the greatness of the realm maintained, and the prosperity of the people secured. And if a change in the franchise was only proposed as a mode of obtaining political power, and of exciting political agitation, to such proposal they must give their unconditional and uncompromising opposition. He had too much respect for Mr. Locke-King to describe his motion as a measure of that kind. But he must nevertheless describe it as essentially unsatisfactory, not calculated in any degree to meet the exigency of the state of affairs; one which he could easily understand, if successful, might lead to much disturbance and readjustment, but which at the same time could conduce to no permanent

or enduringly acceptable settlement; and therefore he must give to it—not because that was the last session of the existing parliament, but because he would take the same view under any circumstances—an unqualified opposition. On a division the motion was lost by a majority of fifty-three.

The chief attraction of the session was, however, Mr. Disraeli's financial statement. As the night approached for the details of the budget to be laid before the House, the excitement and curiosity became very marked. Every seat in the speaker's gallery had been engaged days before-hand; and on the afternoon of the debate the lobbies were crowded with persons appealing to members and corrupting door-keepers for admission into the strangers' gallery. The House was fuller than it had ever been since the famous Don Pacifico affair; for though it was known that the statement to be made was only a provisional statement, and the budget only a provisional budget, yet curiosity was very keen as to how the new chancellor of the exchequer would deal with his first financial exposition. During the last three years he had been almost the only member of his party who had openly abandoned the principle of protection; what course, then, it was asked, would he adopt which would satisfy the views of those who sat on his side of the House, and at the same time would recommend itself to the nation generally? How could he compensate the agricultural interest for their past sufferings? It was known that he disapproved of direct taxation; what would he substitute for it? As one opposed to the principles of free trade, what duties would he add, what remissions would he effect? Then, as is always the case when expectation is at its height, imagination and mendacity went hand in hand and filled the newspapers and the clubs with every fiction that rumour or gossip could devise. One journal had it, "on the very best authority," that Lord Derby had pledged himself to uphold the policy of Protection, and that the moment Mr.

Disraeli rose to address the House, some most startling disclosures would be made. Another declared, also "on the very best authority," that Mr. Herries was about to move for the restoration of the navigation laws. Liverpool and Manchester held mass meetings, vowing that they would move heaven and earth to turn out the government if the duty of a single farthing were placed on the importation of foreign corn. Tadpole, who was an income-tax commissioner, hovered nervous and worried between White's and the Carlton, wondering whether there was any truth in the report that the income tax was not to be renewed? Taper, who was drawing his £1200 a year in the inland revenue, had heard that the excise duties on soap and paper were about to be removed, and that his appointment was in danger. Then the men with their special interests, and the men with their special hobbies, wanted to know how they would be affected by the forthcoming budget. The farmers wanted to know whether the malt tax would be taken off; the economists wanted to know what exemptions were to be made to the principle of direct taxation; the manufacturers wanted to know what excise duties, which pressed so heavily upon their wares, were to be removed or reduced; Liverpool and Mincing Lane were anxious as to the duty on tea; the distillers hoped there would be a clause in the budget placing the dealers of home-made spirits in bond on a footing of equality with the dealers of foreign and colonial spirits, with regard to the loss by leakage and evaporation; whilst the military element made bets as to the cost of the Kaffir war. In short, there was not an individual or a calling which did not look forward to the day when curiosity would be satisfied, and timidity be set at rest from suspense.

At last the long anticipated moment arrived. The order of the day had been read for a committee of ways and means; Mr. Bernal had taken his seat in the chair; and then, amid encouraging applause

from both sides of the House, immediately followed by the stillest silence, Mr. Disraeli rose up (April 30, 1852) to lay before the country his financial statement. It was his habit in most of his carefully prepared speeches, not merely to adhere to dry facts, but whilst imparting a literary flavour to his matter, at the same time to give it an educational tone. On this occasion he began by sketching the history of the revenue, and the source from which it was raised. There were three modes, he said, of raising the revenue of this country—by duties upon articles of foreign import, by duties upon articles of domestic manufacture, and by a system of direct taxation. The income for the preceding year had exceeded the expenditure by some £2,000,000, but for the year to come the expiration of the income tax would leave a deficiency estimated at the same amount. The question, therefore, was, how was that deficiency of £2,000,000 to be supplied? He did not, in the present parliament, certainly think the prospect of making up that deficiency by an increase of the customs duties was very encouraging. For, during the last ten years—from 1842 to 1851—he found one very remarkable feature in the financial management of the country, and that was, that in every one of those years there had been a reduction of duties upon foreign articles imported into the country. They had reduced or repealed duties upon coffee, upon timber, upon wool, silk, spirits, and numerous other articles, until in the ten years mentioned they had struck off nearly £9,000,000 of calculated revenue from customs duties. That being the case, said Mr. Disraeli, it would be somewhat presumptuous on his part to suppose that he could induce the House to supply the deficiency by the imposition of fresh duties upon imports.

Was his prospect, then, more encouraging when he sought to meet the difficulty by having recourse to duties on articles of domestic manufacture? In

the great controversies upon commercial legislation which had been agitated of late, two opinions had been strenuously advocated in that House as to the preferable means by which the industry of the country might be relieved—the one advocating the repeal of customs duties, the other the remission or the repeal of excise duties. Between these two schools, what was he to do? As the calculated sources of revenue from the customs had been reduced, as he had just stated, by an amount of £9,000,000; so, during the last ten years, by various remissions of the excise duties, a sum of £1,500,000 had been lost on the excise. "If one side of this House," laughed Mr. Disraeli, "are of opinion that you must not supply a deficient revenue by customs duties, and the other side of the House are equally convinced that an excise duty is more injurious to the industry of a country than a duty on the import of foreign articles, what is the prospect of success for a chancellor of the exchequer, if his means of supplying a deficiency are limited to those two still important sources of our public revenue?"

There was, then, the alternative of applying to the third mode in which revenue could be raised—direct taxation. Yet, when he came to consider how hateful both to the House and the nation was the property and income tax, he felt that he had as little to expect from direct taxation as from indirect. What course was he to adopt; for, in questions of finance, the feelings of the people were to be considered as much as the principles of science? In theory, direct taxation was an easy, a simple, and a captivating process; but, when they came to apply it generally, it was astonishing the obstacles they encountered and the prejudices they created. In his opinion, if the principle of direct taxation was to be permanently established in the country, it should be as universal in its application as indirect taxation. "No doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, ever true to his

dislike of partial and class legislation, "by establishing a temporary measure of direct taxation based upon a large system of exemptions, you may give a great impulse to industry; you may lighten the springs of industry very effectually for a time; but—not to dwell upon the gross and glaring injustice of a system of finance that would tax directly a very limited portion of the population—but looking only to the economical and financial consequences of such a system, who cannot but feel that in the long run industry itself must suffer from such a process? For, after all, what is direct taxation founded on a system of exemptions? It is confiscation. It is making war upon the capital which ultimately must employ that very industry which you wish to relieve."

He then entered upon statistics most gratifying for his opponents to listen to. In spite of a vast remission of taxation the actual income of the year 1851–52 had exceeded the income estimated by Sir Charles Wood, the late chancellor of the exchequer, by more than £300,000. In spite of the reduction of the duties on sugar, coffee, and timber the customs had exceeded by some £200,000 the estimates formed by Sir Charles, whilst the consumption and importation of coffee, sugar, and timber had greatly increased. Throughout the whole of the estimates of the late chancellor of the exchequer there was the same pleasant difference between the actual receipts and the calculated receipts—the excise, the post office, stamps, and taxes, &c., all brought more money to the exchequer than had been anticipated. These statements certainly did not prove that free trade had been ruinous to the country, and they were vociferously cheered by the Opposition. It was not, however, every rival who would have had the courage or the generosity of Mr. Disraeli to bring such facts forward. At the same time we must remember that this financial prosperity was not entirely due to free trade; it was due

in no small measure to the levying of the income tax, to the gold discoveries in America and Australia, and to the impetus given to business by the Great Exhibition.

The chancellor of the exchequer then came to his own financial statement. For the estimated expenditure of the year 1852-53 he was scarcely responsible, since its estimate had been prepared by his predecessor in office, Sir Charles Wood. That expenditure he put at over £51,000,000, and he proposed to raise it from the usual sources of indirect taxation.* From the calculations he had made there would be, without the income tax, a deficit of over £2,000,000; he would, therefore, ask for a continuance of the duties on property and income for a limited period, which would leave him a surplus of some £500,000. Then, in conclusion, he expressed the views of the cabinet as to the principles upon which the public revenue should be raised. He looked with great apprehension upon the opinions prevalent in the House of Commons, which seemed opposed to all the great sources of raising the income of the country. He considered that nothing would be more injurious than rashly and rapidly to reduce the sources of indirect taxation, whilst they had come to no general conclusion as to the principles upon which direct taxation should be levied. He was of

opinion that, if the House continued in that mood of mind, it would be impossible to maintain the revenue of the country in the manner which the public credit and the wants of their national establishments required. It was absolutely necessary that the House of Commons should arrive at some definite understanding on what principle the revenue of the country should be raised. Nothing was more pernicious than the systematic reduction of indirect taxation that had been going on, whilst at the same time direct taxes were being levied from a very limited class. "Sir," said the chancellor of the exchequer, addressing the chairman, "we would not have shrunk from undertaking the laborious effort of examining the whole of our financial system, animated by these views and actuated by this purpose. But I put it with confidence to the committee whether it has been possible for us to undertake a duty which demands labour so patient, research so considerable, and an amount of time which no member of the government, I am sure, has yet been able to devote to it. The committee will, I am sure, recollect that it is only two months since Her Majesty's present government acceded unexpectedly to office, . . . and although the indulgence of the House, of which no person can be more sensible than myself, has assisted me in attempting to conduct the business of this House, still the claims of the House and of my department have, I can assure the committee, rendered it physically impossible for me to embark in such an undertaking."

Thus, practically, Mr. Disraeli's budget was framed upon the lines of the Liberal policy. He had no alternative. He disapproved of the income tax, yet he felt bound to impose it; he disapproved of the systematic reduction of indirect taxes, yet he had to submit to it; he found in the pigeon holes of the treasury a budget ready to his hand, and time had been wanting to manipulate it into a more Conservative measure. He had said nothing as to Protection, and throughout his speech, with a

* The estimated expenditure for the current year, ending in April, 1853, was £51,163,979, viz.:—

Debts and charges on Consolidated Fund,	£80,550,000
Army,	6,491,898
Navy (including Packet Service),	6,493,000
Ordnance,	2,487,000
Civil Estimates,	4,182,086
Cafre War,	660,000
Militia,	850,000
Total,	£51,163,979

The sources of supply were estimated as follows:—

Customs,	£20,572,000
Excise,	14,604,895
Stamps,	6,389,000
Taxes,	8,090,000
Property tax (half a year),	2,600,000
Post Office,	988,000
Woods,	285,000
Miscellaneous,	260,000
Old Stores,	400,000

Total income, £49,088,895

manly candour which refuted many of his former protestations, he admitted that free trade had not caused the revenue of the country to decrease. Still, as we shall see from the budget he, towards the end of the year, laid before the country, and which was his own measure, and not, as it were, a compulsory adaptation of the scheme of a Liberal cabinet, he was loyal to the interests whose claims he had always advocated. "Disraeli has this evening," writes Lord Palmerston, "made a good financial statement. His speech of two hours was excellent, well arranged, clear, and well delivered, but it made out the complete success of the financial and commercial measures of the last ten years of the Peel and of the Whig administration. . . . He was vociferously cheered by Liberals and Peelites, but listened to in sullen silence by supporters of the government. . . . He has entirely thrown over the idea of import duty on corn—or in other words the principle of Protection." There is some exaggeration in this statement. In the first place, as we shall prove, he was not listened to in sullen silence by his own party, for his words were cordially approved of by those sitting on the Tory side of the House. Nor was his throwing over the principle of Protection an act of recent conversion, as Lord Palmerston's remarks would imply. During the last three years Mr. Disraeli had, as we have shown by his frequent utterances, maintained the impracticability of resorting to a duty on corn in a crowded island like our own, where the home-grown wheat was not in proportion to the demands of the population. He had abandoned the principle of Protection so far as the necessities of life were concerned, and instead of Protection he had substituted compensation: the interests that had specially suffered, he asserted, should be specially compensated. He was in favour, as he more than once declared in the House of Commons, of free trade, but not of "one-sided free trade."

The speech he delivered on this occa-

sion was undoubtedly a great success. Sir Charles Wood—and there was little love lost between the late chancellor of the exchequer and his successor in office—declared that he concurred not only in the course which Mr. Disraeli proposed, but in most of the observations addressed by that gentleman to the House. He considered that the financial statement of Mr. Disraeli had afforded the most ample testimony to the success of the Liberal commercial policy during the last ten years. "A more triumphant case," said Sir Charles, "I do not wish to see made out, than that which the right hon. gentleman has made for us to-night; and I trust that from his evidence—unsuspicious as it is—honourably and candidly as it has been given—the country will come to the conclusion that this is the proper policy that has been and ought to be pursued by past and future finance ministers in this country. . . . I feel that there is no necessity for me to make any statement on this occasion. I thank the right hon. gentleman for the bold manner in which he has spoken out on our financial condition. I am grateful to him for the kind manner in which he has expressed himself towards me personally. I thank him for the cordial estimate which he has formed of the success of our late policy; I take it as an augury that no change will be attempted to be made. I approve of the course which he intends to take for the ensuing year; and so far as depends upon me—and I trust I may add the House—every facility will be given him to pass his resolution with the least possible delay."

Mr. Hume was less generous and more critical. He agreed with Mr. Disraeli in denouncing all the exemptions allowed under the income-tax; yet he was much surprised that the measure, which had been branded by the chancellor of the exchequer as unjust, was to be continued. Still, as a free trader, he thanked Mr. Disraeli; for, if ever there was a speech which proved the truth of the principles of free trade, it was the speech of the hon. member for Bucks. It was highly

creditable to the right hon. gentleman, that he should have stated the truth in the way he had done. He hoped that Mr. Disraeli looked back with regret and remorse on his past career, and the manner in which Sir Robert Peel had been persecuted. Yet, he was not one of those who would now cast back those taunts upon the right hon. gentleman; on the contrary, he would give credit to any man who, finding that he had been in error, had the manliness to come forward and state his conviction. As to the future, he wished to see the income tax made equal, and all exemptions removed, and the people relieved from the burden of indirect taxation. But Mr. Disraeli had proposed to do nothing. The present budget was a stand-still budget; it did nothing but continue the present burdens upon the country. He was sorry to disturb the general unanimity of feeling by being the only person to express dissatisfaction; but he was dissatisfied, because he thought that the people had a right now to expect some relief from taxation.

Mr. Baring, who was a great authority in the House upon commercial matters, praised the prudence of the chancellor of the exchequer in framing a "stand-still budget," when he was not sure what might be the future expenditure of the country. The free traders had been very jubilant; but he considered that Mr. Disraeli had taken too bright a view of the result of the late commercial legislation. He considered that the financial prosperity of the country was due more to the imposition of the property and income tax than to the principles of free trade. Without that tax which, though imposed to meet a pressing emergency, was continued for other purposes, they would never have been without a deficiency at any one period, or have attained their present position. Nor did he see that, after all their reductions in the excise and customs duties, they could yet dispense with it. The Liberals declared that they had taken off £10,000,000 of taxes; but that was not the case, for the

income tax had extracted, during the last ten years, £4,500,000 yearly from the pockets of the nation; of course, with that impost always ready to hand, the Liberals could afford every now and then to give a little in the way of remission of taxes. "If you pick my pocket," said Mr. Baring, "of £5 a year, at the end of ten years you may make me a present of £10, and may give me £1 or £2 occasionally in the meanwhile, but let the debtor and creditor account be taken, and what would be the result? Let the House take into consideration what the country had paid in taxation by the property tax, and he should be very much surprised if it was not found that the increase of remission was not so great as had been supposed. He did not mean to say that they would not show an increase; but the remission of £10,000,000 had only taken place for a year, while the imposition of £5,000,000 dated ten years ago." He did not think the general prosperity of the country so great as had been supposed, whilst certain interests—the colonial, the shipping, and the agricultural—were in anything but a state of prosperity. He concluded by praising the chancellor of the exchequer, "who had a mind which could grapple with anything, nor did he fail to ornament, elucidate, and enforce whatever he grappled with. The House had that night had the exhibition of the greatest talent and genius applied to the practical concerns of the administration of the country."

From both sides of the House there was but one opinion as to the lucid and well-marshalled speech of the new chancellor of the exchequer. Mr. Gladstone congratulated Mr. Disraeli on his "very able statements," which he had laid before the country "in a manner highly honourable to him, and in a manner peculiarly his own." Mr. Bright "would say honestly that he participated most largely in the satisfaction generally expressed, not with the manner only, but with the matter of the right hon. gentleman's speech." Mr. Labouchere had

listened to it "with deep satisfaction," and rejoiced to see a man of such unquestioned talent filling so high a position. Mr. Muntz declared that "during the twelve years' that he had sat in parliament he had never heard anything more able or lucid." Equally complimentary, as was to be expected, were the remarks of those who sat on the Conservative side of the House. Sir John Tyrell, who represented Essex, denied that the Conservatives, as Mr. Hume had alleged, had listened with long, gloomy countenances to the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer. The statement of Mr. Disraeli was altogether a provisional statement, and the budget a provisional budget. The free traders were unnecessarily elated. It did not follow, because the finances of the country were in a satisfactory state, that the commerce and trade of the country were equally so. It could not be denied that trade was bad; still, a satisfactory statement from the chancellor of the exchequer was perfectly compatible with the existence of great distress in various parts of the country. After the next election controverted points would be settled. The Conservatives did not make war upon commerce, but on the unjust taxation of the country; and when they spoke of Protection, they referred to the redress of grievances. Mr. Alderman Thompson, who had sat in the House thirty-two years, declared that he had never heard a more clear financial statement. In spite of the taunting references from the Liberals to the free-trade tendencies of the chancellor of the exchequer, he understood that Mr. Disraeli preferred that the revenue should be raised by indirect taxation; and therefore he supposed the whole system of taxation would be reconsidered, and relief be given where relief was needed. Mr. Hudson, who represented the shipping interest of Sunderland, rose up to state that the chancellor of the exchequer, in speaking of the prosperity of the country, had not contended that it was owing to free trade. He had not put it upon

that principle at all: he merely stated a fact. Mr. Hudson, therefore, reminded the House that, before free trade existed, the country had enjoyed as much prosperity as it now had, and that money was quite as cheap in the market; whilst the shipping, the colonial, and agricultural interests were then not, as now, depressed and half ruined. Other speakers took the same tone.

The House was evidently in a generous mood. Considering that Mr. Disraeli, whenever the opportunity offered, seldom spared his opponents, it was somewhat remarkable that more was not made out of what party spirit might have construed into a recantation of opinion. Mr. Hume, it is true, had said that "the chancellor of the exchequer stood now in the same situation in which Sir Robert Peel stood after he first introduced those important changes in our financial and commercial system;" but that he would not pursue the matter farther, and unnecessarily wound the right hon. gentleman's feelings. Mr. Reynolds, in the course of his speech, said that if Sir Robert Peel, when he repealed the corn laws, had "found the Whigs bathing and ran away with their clothes," Mr. Disraeli in his turn, by his financial statement, had found Sir Charles Wood napping, and had run away with his budget. Mr. Wakley, the member for Finsbury, after declaring that the statements made by Mr. Disraeli only proved how sound were the principles of the free traders, and how completely they vindicated the course Sir Robert Peel had pursued, cried out, "Would to God Sir Robert Peel had been alive to listen to the elaborate and profound homage paid to him by the chancellor of the exchequer in the exposition of the facts that he had submitted to the House to-night! Homage of a more exalted character, or more calculated to increase the admiration of the country for the memory of that great statesman, was never made either in a senate or any other assembly." With the exception of these

allusions to the past conduct of Mr. Disraeli, the debate was singularly free from personalities—indeed, it was characterized by a geniality, a forbearance, and a chivalrous tone not always apparent in the proceedings of the House of Commons. The resolutions introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer were unanimously agreed to.

A few nights after this financial statement had been made, the ministers were invited to a banquet in the city, presided over by the lord mayor. Their reception was most cordial; and as the host rose to give the toast of the evening—"the health of Her Majesty's ministers"—his good wishes for the prosperity of the cabinet were warmly re-echoed. Lord Derby replied. His speech was listened to with deep attention, for a rumour had got abroad that he had not been well pleased with the statements of his lieutenant, and that he intended to take the first public opportunity that offered to show the country that the principle of Protection had not been abandoned. There was nothing in his matter to create excitement until he came to his closing remarks. "Not many days have elapsed," said Lord Derby, "since a right hon. friend of mine, in a speech which fully and amply refuted the unworthy notion that a man of wit and genius cannot grapple with the ordinary details of statistics—that a man possessing high ability, a vivid imagination, and great eloquence cannot master the driest commercial and financial topics—most ably and most eloquently demonstrated to an admiring House of Commons the great progress which our trade and commerce have made in recent years. . . . There was one point, however, which my right hon. friend in that able speech did not touch upon, and properly did not touch upon, because it did not belong to the fiscal and financial branch of the subject to which his attention was then properly and exclusively devoted. But although he did not touch upon that topic, it is one which I conceive no government

ought to lose sight of in estimating the social and political condition of the country—namely, not only the prosperity and the advancement of commerce, but the effect which may be produced on the condition in which we may find those large classes which, unconnected with commerce, are yet an element of our strength as being mainly producers, though they are also consumers. My lord, a government charged with the administration of the affairs of this country would ill deserve the confidence of any portion of the people, if it confined to the interests of a single class the attention which is due to all, or if it deprived a single class of that share of its attention which it is bound impartially to afford to all; and the problem which every government has to solve is—how to reconcile apparently conflicting interests, so that while giving no undue advantage to one class of our fellow-citizens over another, it may promote the interests of all, and by mutual concessions, and by mutual compromises, may blend the interests of all in one harmonious whole."

When the press circulated these words throughout the country considerable agitation arose. What was meant by "mutual concessions and mutual compromises?" How were the interests of all to be blended in one harmonious whole? The chancellor of the exchequer was in favour of indirect taxation and opposed to direct taxation; were the government then about to return to Protection? These questions were freely asked on all sides. The Peelites and the free traders took alarm, and once more the League held its meetings and stimulated its spokesmen. Humour drew a cartoon, in which it summed up the situation. The scene was Epsom. Lord Derby was holding a confidential conversation with his trainer, whilst two horses, labelled respectively "Protection" and "Free Trade," with their jockeys up, were seen curvetting about on the course. "Which do you declare to win with, my lord?" asks Mr. Punch.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON SUFFERANCE.

ON meeting parliament in his new capacity as chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Disraeli had laid before the House of Commons the business necessary to be gone through before the cabinet recommended a dissolution. He had said, apart from the proceedings indispensable for the supply of Her Majesty's service, that there were three measures of paramount importance—the militia bill, chancery reform, and the distribution of the four forfeited seats consequent upon the disfranchisement of Sudbury and St. Albans—which he desired to see speedily enrolled upon the statute-book. The militia bill had already been brought before the House; chancery reform was in the hands of the lord chancellor; thus the assignment of the forfeited seats was the only one of the three measures which had as yet not been presented for discussion. To Mr. Disraeli this question of redistribution was now intrusted. Sudbury had been disfranchised in 1844, St. Albans but recently. Each borough had returned two members to parliament; thus there were four seats now vacant and ready to be offered to boroughs and competing divisions of shires.

In a full house Mr. Disraeli moved (May 10, 1852) "That leave be given to bring in a bill to assign the seats forfeited by the disfranchisement of the boroughs of St. Albans and Sudbury." He was of opinion, he said, that those seats should be filled up before the dissolution of parliament took place. He was as unable to define the magic in that particular number 658 as he was to prove why twelve should be the number fixed for that tribunal which was the most popular in

the country.* The foundation of all these arrangements was prescription; prescription which consisted of rules created by experience and sanctioned by custom. Prescription was, after all, the most important element of order, of liberty, and of progress; and although he was not inclined to yield to that principle any superstitious adherence, he was still of opinion that the time was not arrived when prescription could be lightly treated by a House of Commons. The inconvenience of outraging such a principle was more easy to comprehend than it was to establish the peculiar arrangement in question. A violation of prescription was an element of disturbance; it led to discontent; it offered a premium to extravagant projects; it invited men to immature schemes and hazardous suggestions; and were it for no other reason than that he felt it would be their duty to warn the House against that which had become a continuous and systematic deficiency in the aggregate numbers of the House of

* The number of the members for the House of Commons stands thus:—

For England and Wales,	493
Scotland,	60
(Before 1832, 45; after 1832, 53).	
Ireland,	105
(Before 1832, 100).	
Total,	658

From Edward I. to Henry VIII., the House of Commons consisted of 74 knights and about 200 burgesses. Henry VIII. extended the right of election to Wales and to certain counties and towns in England, and increased the number of members by thirty-three. Between the reigns of Henry VIII. and Charles II., no less than 180 members were added to the House by royal charter alone. At the date of the union with Scotland the number of members was 513. The Act of union with Scotland added forty-five representatives of that kingdom, afterwards increased to sixty. The Act of union with Ireland made a further addition to the House of 100 Irish members, afterwards increased to 105. As we shall see, from the nature of Mr. Gladstone's remarks in reply to Mr. Disraeli, there is no constitutional limit to the number of members of the House of Commons.

Commons. Deeply convinced of the inconvenience and of the peril of indulging in that continuous and systematic deficiency in their numbers, Her Majesty's ministers had felt it their duty to express that opinion to the House.

If the government, continued Mr. Disraeli, followed their own inclinations, he hardly knew any subject which they would more freely avoid than the settlement of questions like the present. They were essentially invidious. In old days, whenever questions concerning the appropriation of vacant seats were introduced, party passions were necessarily excited. In a country where the government was carried on by the machinery of political party, it was scarcely possible to offer a suggestion for the settlement of a question of the kind, without, of course, the imputation of political motives, and perhaps without the possibility of political bias. But at the present day, a ministry that attempted to recommend to the House measures for the settlement of such questions, had not merely to encounter the ancient and traditionary sentiments of opposite parties. Of late years another element had entered into the discussion of these subjects, which tended peculiarly to embitter feelings, to create jealousies, and to increase difficulties; and that was the unhappy misunderstanding between town and country, which he, for one, notwithstanding all that had passed, hoped yet might be of shorter duration than some persons were disposed to believe.

That unfortunate jealousy which existed between town and country had given rise to an anxiety in a very considerable portion of the country, to see whether other elements wherewith to form a constituency might not be devised than those which had hitherto supplied elements of the electoral body. He had seen many plans which, if they were carried into effect, would send members to parliament by means entitled in every way to their respect, but other than those which were generally had recourse to. It had been proposed that two

of the members for the vacant seats should be apportioned to the University of London. He could truly say that that proposition had not been viewed by Her Majesty's ministers with any sort of prejudice: it had, on the contrary, been observed with interest and with sympathy. He could admire the idea that would permit science and learning, by the immediate exercise of the popular suffrage, to take their place in that House, without the embarrassment of political connection, and without the inconveniences of party passions. But when that question was examined the difficulties were not inconsiderable.

In all suggestions which would lay down as a principle that the elements of their constituent body should be of a less absolutely material character than heretofore—that the intellectual and the moral qualities should be permitted to exercise their influence on that House without a necessary connection with political party—in all those suggestions there was something so plausible to the reason, and so captivating to the imagination, that he could easily understand that they had excited a great public interest, and engaged the approbation of many individuals who were entitled to the highest respect. Suggestions had been made, for example, that it would be desirable that the learned societies, for which that metropolis was celebrated, should furnish a member or members to that House; and, at the first glance, remembering who would probably be among the members thus deputed to that House, it must be admitted to be a proposition highly deserving of their examination. Take the Royal Society, for example. It was a very ancient society. It was founded by a monarch. It had been adorned from the days of Sir Isaac Newton by some of the greatest men whom England had produced. And at that moment it counted among its members some of their fellow-subjects of whom they were most proud. But the House must remember that, when they talk of the

learned societies, in the nineteenth century learned societies no longer necessarily consisted of learned men. The necessity of having a large revenue, and of raising that revenue by public subscriptions, permitted a great number of individuals to be enrolled among learned societies who had no other claim to that distinction than that which was conferred by their wealth and the general respectability of their character. They would not necessarily, therefore, because they delegated to the learned societies the privilege of sending a member or members to parliament, have a constituency formed of learned men.

Another difficulty in the case was to draw the line, if once they admitted a principle so fluctuating in its elements. If the Royal Society—he took that as the oldest and the most distinguished—was entitled to have a representative in that House on the ground that that society itself was a representative of science, there were many other societies who might also assume to represent science. Why, if they admitted the Royal Society, on what principle could they shut out the Geographical Society, or the Zoological Society, or the Astronomical Society? And if they were to take all those societies, and say that by aggregating them together they should form a considerable constituency to whom collectively should be given a representative in parliament, what would prevent new geographical societies, new zoological societies, and new astronomical societies being formed tomorrow, which might urge their claim to the possession of the franchise on the same plea? In fact it was evident that, dealing with the materials before them, it would be in the power of any body of men—any club, for example—to give themselves a scientific designation, to affect scientific pursuits, and to make that a claim for the exercise of the franchise. Therefore, on examining the claims of the learned societies to that privilege, he felt that the difficulties were too great for the government to overcome, and they had

consequently reluctantly dismissed them from consideration.

There was then, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, the claim of the universities which were not represented to consider. That appeared at the first blush to be an extremely plausible plea. The ancient universities of England were represented—the University of Dublin was represented—why then, for example, should not the Scotch universities be represented? But any one who had investigated the question, who had looked into the condition of the Scotch universities, with every wish to recommend such a measure to the House, would find that the elements of a popular constituency were totally wanting; that in the Scotch universities, for instance, there was no body like the Convocation of their English universities; that they had students who never, or rarely ever, became graduates; that there was no privilege annexed in Scotland to the taking out of an academic degree, and that therefore it was seldom that any individual took a degree. If, then, they invested the united universities of Scotland with the privilege of being represented in that House, the privilege would, in fact, be in possession of a few rectors, and about a hundred professors. The elements of a popular constituency were altogether wanting.* Nor could he notice the claim of the London University, as at present that university was too immature, its development too imperfect, for urging any well-founded claim of the nature then in question.

There had also been, he said, another proposition made, which possessed many causes why it should be entertained with the deepest consideration. The government had been urged to recommend to the House to concede, at least, one member to the Inns of Court. The four Inns of Court would, no doubt, afford a considerable and most respectable constituency—a constituency of some thousands arising from corporations

* In 1858 a measure was introduced which conferred on Scottish graduates no little share in the administration of their respective universities.

that had existed from immemorial ages, that had taken a distinguished part in the history of that country, and which had sent to that House some of its most eminent members. The government considered it as no objection to that plan, that an eminent lawyer, by the confidence of the Inns of Court, might find his way into that House without the taint of political or party connection. The government thought that, in an age favourable to legal reform, for example, it was very possible that the appreciation of his fellow-lawyers might select some student who would otherwise shrink from the coarser collisions of public life on the hustings, and yet might take his place in the House of Commons as the representative of a constituency of some thousands of honourable and learned men, and afford by his erudition and his counsel a very great assistance to the deliberations of that House. But, after giving to the question the most deliberate and the most anxious consideration, the government found it impossible to avoid the conclusion that it would be a hopeless task to propose to the House of Commons the allocation of one or two members to the Inns of Court, unless prepared to concede the same privilege to other similar constituencies.

He knew, he said, there was a prejudice—which he did not share—against the too considerable appearance of lawyers in that House. He begged to say that he did not share it, because he remembered how much of their liberty was owing to their law, and was founded upon their law, and that in the most critical periods of their history, lawyers had been the most eminent and fearless champions of the rights of the people of England. He confessed he was surprised, therefore, at the existence of a prejudice such as that, to which, however, he must most reluctantly yield. It was one he had always deplored, one which he could never cease to lament, when he recollected that lawyers had been not only the great upholders of English liberties, but also the greatest

ornaments of the House of Commons; when he remembered that Sir Edward Coke and Lord Bacon both sat in that House; when he remembered that the revered names of Selden and of Somers both belonged to the House of Commons; that in an after age that House resounded with the golden eloquence of Mansfield, and was once adorned by the majestic virtues of Romilly; and that it was their happiness to remember that amongst their members the esteemed descendants of some of those great men were still to be found. But though he could not agree in a prejudice which he thought unwarranted by facts, he felt it would not do for the government to propose, unless the proposition were attended by some identical or analogous projects, to allot one or more of the four vacant seats to the Inns of Court; therefore, on the part of the government, after careful consideration, and with the most ample desire to introduce constituencies founded upon those elements, and believing that they might contribute to the increased reputation of that assembly, he must renounce at present any attempt to form a constituency out of those interesting but, he feared, impracticable elements.

Having, therefore, considered the various suggestions that had been laid before him, Mr. Disraeli said he would now proceed to state how the government proposed to deal with the four forfeited seats. The constituency of the West Riding of Yorkshire was about 37,000; and they proposed to apportion two of the vacant seats to that constituency, dividing the West Riding into two districts, each of which should be represented by two members. Leeds was to be the town of election for the northern division of the riding; and Wakefield the election town for the southern division. The two remaining seats were to be given to the southern division of the county of Lancashire.

There was no discussion on the motion. The only opponent was Mr. Gladstone, who, in a long speech, criticised less the

details of Mr. Disraeli's measure than the expediency of introducing it at the present moment. He disputed the statement that the House of Commons was limited to any "constitutional number." There was no "magic" nor "cabalistic" virtue in the total "658." There was nothing beyond mere accident, and the duration of about forty years, that should recommend the number 658 to their notice. There was a popular error on that subject—there was, he believed, an idea in the popular mind that the number 658 represented the great balance of interests in that country. Yet, he would challenge Mr. Disraeli to find that number distinctly stated in any one single act of parliament relating to the representation of the people in that House. The number 658 was never intended to be the legal and constitutional number which composed the House of Commons. It was a pure question of convenience and policy, and nothing else, as to what the number of members of that House should be. Still, that was merely a secondary matter. The question was, was it wise to bring forward such a measure in a moribund parliament? The eve of a dissolution was the worst possible moment to introduce a proposal of that kind. The forfeited seats ought not to be held up to the country as prizes for every man to snatch at. The matter ought to be discussed and settled, not in an unsettled and provisional state of things like the present, but when they had an administration in possession of definite and decided political power. He would not meet the proposal by a direct negative, but would move that the House pass to the "orders of the day." On a division, the amendment of Mr. Gladstone was accepted by a majority of eighty-six. It was not until some years later that these forfeited seats were dealt with. In 1861 the government of Lord Palmerston accepted, to a certain degree, the proposals of Mr. Disraeli. Two seats were then given to the West Riding of Yorkshire; but, instead of South Lancashire being divided, a third member

was placed at the disposal of the county, and the town of Birkenhead was enfranchised.

This rejection of Mr. Disraeli's scheme was not so much directed against the measure itself, as it was against the government declining at once to appeal to the country. The burning question of the hour was, whether Protection or free trade was to be the commercial policy of the future. Lord Derby had himself said, on taking office, that he would abide by the verdict of the nation as to the maintenance or rejection of free-trade principles. Why, then, did he not dissolve parliament? It was an unheard of thing, cried the Liberals, for men who had made Protection a battle-cry for years, to take office, and then to refuse to state openly whether they intended to propose an alteration in the corn laws or not! The game of thimble-rig was about to be played, and the country gulled and plundered under a thimble-rig administration! The Conservatives were keeping matters dark, in order at the election to canvass the counties as Protectionists and the boroughs as free traders!

"It was in vindication of the constitutional principle," said Mr. Gladstone, "that a government which found itself at issue with the existing parliament upon a cardinal point of its policy, was bound either to resign (which of course no one recommends under the circumstances) or else to make its appeal to the people. But there was another object which parliament, I think, had in view; and that was, to discharge its solemn duty to those great principles of commercial policy which we are bound, I think, to see well brought home into haven, and that at the earliest moment. It is a folly against which every man ought to guard, to suppose that because the government are in power, and the principles of our law in regard to commerce have not been altered by past measures, therefore we are to rest satisfied. It would be, I think, no fulfilment, but an abandonment of our duty, to

be contented that the matter should so remain. It has been admitted on the other side, that it is the solemn duty of us all to bring this question to a formal and final issue; and that can only be done, as the head of the government stated, and all its members, I believe, have allowed, by an appeal to the people at a dissolution; and therefore, in seeking a dissolution, it is not for any partial or party object, but it is because, if there be one duty more clearly incumbent than another at the present time upon that large majority of the House of Commons who have on repeated occasions testified their own cordial adhesion to the principles of free trade, it is this—that they should not be content to leave those principles to exist upon sufferance—to leave them at the mercy of the chapter of accidents; that they should not be content (I frankly own it) to leave these principles, as matters now stand, in the guardianship of gentlemen whose own inclinations, without doubt or disguise, are opposed to them, but that we should expedite that process which the prime minister himself has justly and fairly proposed—namely, that of obtaining the deliberate judgment of the constituency in regard to the principles of our commercial legislation; and then we should find the government in a position to lay down the course of policy by which they intend to be guided, and, if they find the opinion of the public adverse to the policy they had pursued, they might frankly and finally own and submit to that state of facts; so that, at length, this great controversy may be ended, and the machinery of the constitution fall into its usual course and order.”

A wit in the House of Commons was asked, What was meant by “factious opposition?” “Wait till you see the Liberals out of office,” he quietly replied. Lord Derby declined to be dictated to. He had said, on taking office, that for his own part he thought that the appeal to the constituencies ought to be made as speedily as was consistent with the interests of the country; but at the same time he declared

that neither taunts nor calumnies would induce him to recommend a dissolution sooner than he thought expedient. He had assumed, he would not say office, but its responsibilities, from no party motive of his own; the late government fell by their internal weakness, by their notorious incapacity, by the lukewarmness of their friends, and by their own quarrels. They had declared a dissolution inexpedient for themselves, and he wished to know with what face they now came forward in factious opposition, and sought to drive him to appeal to the country, after his declaration that the system of free trade should not be altered during the present session, but that the attention of the government would be solely directed to those great measures of legal and social reform on which the heart of the nation was set. If the business of the country were factiously interrupted, the evil that might result would be visited on the heads of those agitators who created the interruption. Though he desired to repair the injustice which certain classes of the community had sustained by the repeal of the corn laws, such a step could only be taken after careful deliberation, and then not by a bare majority, but after an expression of very general concurrence on the part of the country. The question he would then put before the country would be, “Will you give your confidence to the men who deserted the helm of the state in the hour of danger, and then joined in factious opposition to render all government impossible? Or will you rely on the government which did not shrink from the post of danger, which is determined to uphold the Protestant religion, to strengthen religious and moral education, to resist the aggression of those demagogues who employ their power over the masses only to mislead them, and to maintain the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of parliament? These were the principles on which he should appeal to the country; he would then use the words put into the mouth of the meanest criminal, but not unworthy of the first

minister of the Crown, 'I elect to be tried by God and my country.'"

In the present conflict of opinions, and owing to the expeditious manner in which the government had conducted the public business intrusted to them, the time for dissolving parliament was rapidly approaching. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, thought the hour opportune to inform his constituents of what had occurred in the past, and what was about to take place in the future. He utilised the leisure of the Whitsuntide recess in drawing up an important document addressed to his supporters. We give it in full, as since the date of its first issue it has never been republished:—

"GENTLEMEN,—I take the opportunity of returning into the county to inform you that on the dissolution of parliament, which may be shortly expected, I shall again solicit the distinguished office of being your member—an honour which you have twice unanimously conferred on me.

"The occasion is critical, and it is as well to disentangle from the misrepresentations of ignorant or interested persons what is really at stake.

"In 1842 Sir Robert Peel, at the head of the Conservative party, converted a considerable and continuous deficiency in the public revenue into a surplus by the imposition of an income tax, which also permitted him greatly to mitigate our tariff.

"These measures realized all the success which the Conservative party anticipated from them. In the course of four years, seven millions of pounds of customs duties were repealed without materially diminishing the revenue derived from that branch, and no domestic interest in the country suffered from the change.

"The principles on which these alterations were effected were the removal of prohibitions, the reduction of duties to such a scale as admitted 'fair competition' with domestic produce, and the free admission of all raw materials.

"I had the satisfaction of voting for these measures, in company with those gentlemen who now honour the present government with their support.

"Since the four years closing with 1845, during which the Conservative party carried these wise and beneficial measures, two great changes in our commercial system have taken place—the free introduction of foreign corn and of slave-grown sugar.

"The first of these arrangements was not originally contemplated in the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel, for he opposed the repeal of the corn

laws within a few months previously to his abrogating them. When he recommended their repeal it was to meet an emergency; and he stated to Lord George Bentinck, in my hearing, that he believed that repeal would not materially affect the price of agricultural produce.

"The admission of slave-grown sugar was not approved by Sir Robert Peel.

"These two measures, unlike the preceding ones, have occasioned severe suffering among the producing classes which they affect. The distress of the agricultural classes has been admitted, announced, and deplored from the Throne, under the advice of a Whig ministry; and the consequences of the alteration of the sugar duties were so disastrous to our free-producing colonies that, within two years after the passing of the Act of 1846, a Whig ministry also found it necessary to modify their own measure.

"The sufferings of the agricultural and colonial classes have arisen from their being thrown into unlimited competition with the foreigner on unequal terms with the rest of their fellow-subjects. Those unequal conditions result in great measure from the peculiar imposts and the vexatious regulations to which our agricultural and sugar-producing industries are subject.

"The same precipitation which attended the repeal of the productive duties on corn and sugar accompanied the repeal of the navigation laws. Even the proposers of that measure now admit that 'the shipping interest, exposed to severe rivalry, is subject to burdens and restrictions which impede its prosperity.'

"This is the language of the minister who himself repealed the navigation laws, and yet left the burdens and restrictions which impeded the prosperity of our mercantile marine. This opinion will be found in the recent address of Lord John Russell to his constituents. That address deserves the attentive study of the shipping interest.

"Her Majesty's ministers would consider these burdens and restrictions with a view to their removal.

"The farmers hitherto have been the persons who have been most injured by the repeal of the corn laws; but the diminution of rent in Great Britain is greater than is generally supposed. In preparing the financial statement for the year, it was officially represented to me that I must contemplate, in estimating the produce of the income tax, a diminution of rent not much less in amount than five millions sterling. Practically speaking, in this country rent has become a return for the capital invested in the improvement of land. Laws to secure a return for such investment are not for a moment to be tolerated, but laws which by imposing unequal taxes discourage that invest-

ment are, irrespective of their injustice, highly impolitic; for nothing contributes more to the enduring prosperity of a country than the natural deposit of its surplus capital in the improvement of its soil. Justice to the land, in all systems of finance, is equally the interest of the proprietor and the farmer, but it is also equally the interest of the community.

"There is no portion of the United Kingdom that has suffered more from the precipitate repeal of the corn laws than Ireland. The claim of that country to the consideration of parliament is irresistible.

"The time has gone by when the injuries which the great producing interests endure can be alleviated or removed by a recurrence to the laws which, previously to 1846, protected them from such calamities. The spirit of the age tends to free intercourse, and no statesman can disregard with impunity the genius of the epoch in which he lives. But every principle of abstract justice, and every consideration of high policy, counsel that the producer should be treated as fairly as the consumer, and intimate that when the native producer is thrown into unrestricted competition with external rivals, it is the duty of the legislature in every way to diminish, certainly not to increase, the cost of production.

"It is the intention of Her Majesty's ministers to recommend to parliament, as soon as it is in their power, measures which may effect this end.

"One of the soundest means, among others, by which this result may be accomplished is a revision of our taxation. The times are favourable to such an undertaking; juster notions of taxation are more prevalent than heretofore; powerful agencies are stirring which have introduced new phenomena into finance, and altered the complexion of the fiscal world; and the possibility of greatly relieving the burdens of the community, both by adjustment and reduction, seems to loom in the future.

"But nothing great can be effected by any ministry unless they are supported by a powerful majority in parliament. Our predecessors were men who, for personal honour and administrative ability, need not shrink from a comparison with any body of individuals qualified to serve Her Majesty; but they were never sure of a parliamentary majority: hence much of their unsatisfactory conduct. They were justified, from the broken state of parties, in their continuance in office, which they never evinced any unworthy readiness to retain; but it is far from desirable that such indulgence should become a chronic weakness of our constitution.

"In the brief period during which we have held the reins, although placed in a position of great

embarrassment, from the impossibility of at once appealing to the country, we have introduced three measures which, it is hoped, will soon become the law of the land. One is a measure of internal defence, which it is believed will soon prove both popular, economical, and efficient; the second would confer on an interesting and important colony a constitution founded on the right principles which should govern dependencies; the third will at length achieve a complete reform of the Court of Chancery.

"There was a fourth measure which we proposed. Two petty boroughs, long infamous for corruption, had been justly and wisely disfranchised. We recommended to parliament that these forfeited seats should be transferred to two of the most important communities of the country, distinguished not only for their vast wealth and teeming population, but by all the enduring elements of national greatness. A combination of parliamentary sections defeated on a technical pretext this wise and generous proposition, which would have added strength and lustre to the House of Commons, and have asserted the popular principle in a manner consistent with that maintenance of classes which becomes a free and ancient monarchy, and which is the best security for order and liberty.

"The time of the House of Commons has been much occupied of late by a discussion whether the management of the Roman Catholic college of Maynooth requires investigation. Without prejudging the question, Her Majesty's ministers have felt it their duty to support such an inquiry. We have been anxious to subdue the heat of religious controversy, and to deal impartially with all Her Majesty's subjects, whether in communion with the Church of Rome or the Church of England; but we cannot sanction an opinion now in vogue that, since the Act of 1829, the constitution of the country has ceased to be Protestant. By the Act of Settlement our form of government is that of a Protestant monarchy; and it is our belief that the people of this country are resolved so to maintain it, not only in form, but in spirit.

"Various schemes have been devised for the extension and improvement of the education of the people, and among others a measure was proposed by an intelligent community during the present session of parliament, to the principles of which we could not accede. The only principle in the present diversity of religious opinion which seems to be just is that of encouraging the voluntary efforts of the several religious bodies by grants of public money in proportion to the extent to which those efforts have been made. In asserting for all this universal right, we claim for the church, the national depository of sacred truth,

that the freedom of her efforts in the cause of education should not be fettered by regulations and restrictions which are not required to afford security for a due application of the public funds.

"I have touched, gentlemen, on most of the topics which now engage the attention of the country. They are not mean issues. The country will have to decide whether it will maintain a ministry formed on the principles of Conservative progress; whether it will terminate for ever, by just and conciliatory measures, the misconceptions which have too long prevailed between producer and consumer, and extinguish the fatal jealousy that rankles between town and country; whether our colonial empire shall be maintained and confirmed; whether the material development of Ireland shall at length be secured; whether such alterations as time and circumstance may appear to justify and require in the construction of the House of Commons shall be made in that spirit of revolution which has arrested the civilization of Europe, or in the spirit of our popular though not democratic institution; whether the Church of England shall still remain a national church; whether the Crown of England shall still be a Protestant crown.

"I believe that the county of Buckingham is not in doubt on these heads, and therefore I appeal to you with confidence for your support. I cannot vie with the patriots and the statesmen whom for so many generations you have sent up to parliament; but I will promise you this, on my part and on that of my colleagues, that if public opinion ratify the choice of our gracious sovereign, we will earnestly endeavour that the honour and the interests of the country shall not suffer by our administration.

"I remain, Gentlemen,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"B. DISRAELI.

"HUGHENDEN MANOR,

"June 2, 1852."

Since the government declined to dissolve the Houses until the urgent measures they deemed necessary to pass had been entered upon the pages of the statute-book, it pleased a certain section of the Opposition to imitate recent tactics, and use every effort to thwart the ministerial policy. Nothing that was introduced was right; everything that was not introduced was wrong. If the militia bill was hurried through committee, an unnecessary scare was being created throughout the country; if the consideration of its clauses was de-

ferred, the government were neglecting the most vital interests of the people. If the Maynooth grant was brought forward, the government were being intimidated by the Roman Catholics; if it was not brought forward, the government were animated by a bigotry and intolerance disgraceful in an enlightened age like the present. If a constitution for New Zealand was discussed, our domestic prosperity was being sacrificed to a meddling colonial policy; if the debate on New Zealand was postponed, we forgot that we were an empire, and interested ourselves only in insular details. Then there were acrid discussions as to the remission of the hop duty, the paper duty, the advertisement duty, and the stamp on newspapers. Whatever the government proposed was disputed; whatever it opposed was warmly advocated. In the eyes of these obstructionists ministers were always in error.

Lord John Russell took advantage of this splenetic conduct on the part of certain of his followers to pass in review (June 14, 1852) the labours of the session. The ostensible reason for his appearance in the character of a self-elected critic upon ministerial mismanagement, was the occasion of an outrage having been committed upon a British subject. It seems that a Mr. Mather, an Englishman, had been cut down in the streets of Florence by an Austrian officer, and Lord Malmesbury, as the secretary for foreign affairs, had been intrusted with the diplomatic task of demanding reparation for the insult. According to Lord John, the foreign secretary had pursued a double course; he was frightened of Austria, but bullied Tuscany; in his correspondence with Vienna he had treated the affair as an unhappy accident, whilst in his correspondence with Florence he considered it a wanton outrage. Nor could he, continued the ex-premier, congratulate Lord Malmesbury upon the course he had pursued respecting the pecuniary consideration to be offered to Mr. Mather. The foreign secretary had pressed Mr. Mather to name a sum to compensate him for his wounded feelings; when

that sum was named, it was considered exorbitant, and instructions were then sent to the British representative at Florence to demand from the Tuscan government "a sum proportionate to the sufferings of Mr. Mather." Such a mode of conducting the affair, Lord John considered, could only lead to ridicule and contempt; it would degrade, not the country, but the government.

Having thus delivered himself upon the text of his discourse, the speaker branched off to other topics, and entered upon a severe criticism of the course of action the Derby cabinet had adopted since their accession to power. They had taken office upon a distinct understanding that they were to declare their policy, whereas they had studiously concealed it. What he and the country generally desired to know, continued Lord John, was not so much the particular measures to be proposed by the government, as the spirit in which they were to be framed. Did the present government, or did they not, adopt the financial and commercial policy which was established in 1842, and which was continued until the present moment? Was the policy of the last ten years beneficial to the country? ought it to be followed and adhered to, and care taken that it should not be abrogated? Ought that policy to be their guide, or was it injurious, mischievous, and would the injurious effects be averted by alteration? To these questions neither the House nor the country ever had anything like an answer. At first everybody entertaining liberal opinions had been delighted with the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer, for it was looked upon as conclusive in favour of a free-trade policy. "The right hon. gentleman, however," said Lord John, pointing to Mr. Disraeli, "found a critic, a commentator, and an adversary; and who was he? He appeared at the Mansion House in the person of the first lord of the treasury. That was the scene which Lord Derby chose for criticising his chancellor of the exchequer. The noble earl pointed out a great omission in his colleague's address,

and supplied it by something not as lucid and conclusive as the chancellor of the exchequer's statement, but by something that was eminently obscure and ambiguous. This was certainly a novel proceeding. As a member for London I have often had occasion to dine in the city, but it never occurred to me to avail myself of any of those opportunities to answer my own chancellor of the exchequer."

Now what did these conflicting statements signify? he asked. The premier talked mysteriously of Protection, whilst the chancellor of the exchequer in his recent address to his constituents, said that the time for restoring the protective duties of 1846 had gone by. Which policy was to be followed? He hoped, after the farmers had been deceived for the last four years about Protection being restored, that they would not allow themselves again to be deceived by the promise of measures which were to give them prosperity—a prosperity which indeed was only to be attained by the exercise of their skill and industry. In conclusion, the speaker condemned the various measures, with the exception of the militia bill, which the government had supported during the session. He found fault with their conduct in the matter of chancery reform, with their disturbance of the system of education in Ireland, and with their efforts to give the Established Church a portion of the grant for education. Such mismanagement arose, he said, from the government holding no decided opinions whatever. "This country," concluded Lord John Russell, "will never be satisfied, unless they have men ruling the country who have some principles and some opinions. It may seem to be a popular thing to say that the country has only by a majority to express an opinion in favour of a corn law, and that the corn laws will be re-imposed; or that if there be a majority against such a policy, then we shall have free trade. That may seem to be a popular declaration, and one likely to attract popular favour; but depend upon it,

it is not so. The people of this country would be better pleased to see men who had some opinions, and who were ready to bring questions clearly before them. Is the country likely to place its confidence in a government that has no opinions, no principles, and which is ready to be guided, by any wind that may rise, into any port that is open for them?"

This attack upon the Conservative policy gave rise to a debate, in which various members joined before Mr. Disraeli stood up in vindication of himself and his party. Lord Stanley defended the foreign secretary as to his management of the Mather affair. Lord John Russell had supposed that the transaction had been characterized in two different ways by Lord Malmesbury; but in terming it an accident, the noble lord merely expressed an opinion that there was nothing in it of a national character; that it was the hasty act of an individual; but looking at it as a personal, not a national act, it was brutal and unprovoked. The inquiry before the Tuscan court had been a fair one, and the officer had been tried before a legal tribunal of his country and acquitted. It was very difficult to say what course the government could take, when a British subject had been insulted in a foreign country, and the offender, when tried by a national tribunal, had been acquitted, though illegally. It would be, he said, most unwise to make Austria solely responsible for a transaction of that kind, since it would virtually recognize the military occupation of Tuscany by that power.

Mr. Osborne lamented that the case of Mr. Mather should have been mixed up with the imbecility of the present government. The attempt to defend the foreign secretary had done little to clear up the case. The government was bound to call upon Austria, who had expressed no contrition for the offence; on the contrary, she commended the officer who cut down Mr. Mather. He charged Lord Malmesbury with having trifled with the honour

of the country, and having disgraced them all in the eyes of Europe.

The Marquis of Granby drew the attention of the House to the commercial policy of the country. If it could be shown that their late policy had benefited the people at large, it should be continued and carried out; but if, as he believed it had had, and would have, evil effects on all classes, it should be gradually modified, and eventually reversed. He read a variety of statements showing that the colonies, Scotland, Spitalfields, the shipping interest, as well as other trades, so far from prospering, were suffering; he doubted even whether the manufacturing interest was in a state of real prosperity. Pauperism, crime, and emigration had increased; while the deposits in savings banks had, since 1846, gradually declined.

Lord Palmerston declined to follow Lord Granby, regarding all such discussions upon a question that was dead as waste of time. He wished to address to the House a few observations upon the first topic; and he confessed that he had read with anything but feelings of satisfaction the papers relative to the affair of Mr. Mather. He found much to criticise in the proceedings both of the late and of the present government—in almost all parties, in short, but Mr. Mather and his son. What was the course which, in that case, the British government ought to have pursued? First, to ascertain the facts of the case, and if there had been a wrong, to require the punishment of the offender and compensation to the sufferer. No one could say that in that case a grievance was not suffered. The outrage had been committed by an Austrian officer at Florence. Who was responsible? The government under which the outrage was committed; but where there was no power there ought to be no responsibility. The Austrians in Florence were dependent upon the will of the Austrian government, not upon that of Tuscany; the Austrian troops in Florence were not amenable to the Tuscan govern-

ment; so that Austria was, *primâ facie*, the government from which reparation should have been demanded. The present cabinet were also open to criticism for calling upon the sufferer to assess his own damages. He agreed with the government in the importance of maintaining the independence of Tuscany; but that could not be done by making one country pay for what had been done by another. The practical lesson read to Tuscany might have been better read to Austria. The papers showed the lamentable condition of a large portion of the Italian states; and he hoped the present government, being upon friendly terms with the two governments mainly interested in the decision of that matter, would endeavour to persuade the governments of France and Austria to terminate the anomalous state of things which prevailed in many of those states.

When Lord Palmerston had concluded, Mr. Disraeli rose up. He said no one could pretend that, though the act in question was outrageous and cruel, it was not, what Lord Malmesbury had described it, an accidental one. When it was said that the government had not applied for redress in the right quarter, but that they ought to have applied to Austria, he replied that the course they had pursued had been the result of anxious inquiry. Where a state maintained diplomatic relations with the British government, it was felt that with rights there must be correlative duties; and as Tuscany had been recognized and treated as an independent state, an outrage upon a British subject in Tuscany ought to be repaired by Tuscany. He had no doubt that Austria would have been very willing that they should seek reparation of her instead of Tuscany, as it would have been a virtual acknowledgment of her supremacy in that country; but that was not the policy which the present government wished to maintain with relation to Italy. He fully justified the course taken by Lord Malmesbury, and his recommendation to Mr. Mather to accept, as an acknow-

ledgment of a wrong, a fine from the government of Tuscany. With reference to the closing observations of Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli avowed that the government looked with great interest and anxiety to the state of Italy; but he reminded the noble lord that it was not worse now than the present government had found it. Her Majesty's ministers were bound to proceed in the matter with great deliberation; yet he hoped the time might come when the fairest portion of Europe should no longer be occupied by foreign garrisons.

He then proceeded to deal with the "postscript" of Lord John Russell, and to defend the government from the charges advanced by the member for London, in his criticism of the work of the session. "I am bound to notice," he said, "the elaborate attack of the noble lord. He has taken a review of what has occurred during the brief period that we have sat upon these benches. We have heard from him a statement of that kind before, during the course of this session. The very first night that I took my seat, the noble lord rose and opened his batteries. He has since recurred to the attack; but his drums were muffled, and the fire slackened. Now we have a last effort; but it is a forlorn hope that will not take the citadel." Mr. Disraeli begged to differ from Lord John as to the value of the measures for chancery reform; he believed that if they passed they would confer upon the country the greatest blessing that society had for a long while experienced. He explained, at some length, the conduct of the government in treating of the great question of education, and denied that they had recourse to unjustifiable proceedings—that they had stealthily obtained, and cheated the House out of, a money vote. In spite of the charges brought against them, ministers had no fear as to the future.

"Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, "the noble lord may rest assured that we shall go to the country with no undue confidence, I trust, but at least in a manner which will

allow us to meet the people without shame. And, whatever the noble lord may say of our change of opinions, I shall be prepared to vindicate them here, or before my constituents, in a manner which, I trust, will entitle me to maintain their good opinion which I now possess. I deny that there has been, on our part, at any time since the unfortunate circumstances of 1846—circumstances which I ever deeply deplored—I deny that there has been any attempt to change the position which we then took up. Sir, I do now, and ever shall, look on the changes which took place in 1846, both as regards the repeal of the corn laws and the alteration of the sugar duties, as totally unauthorized. I opposed them, as most of my honourable friends about me opposed them, from an apprehension of the great suffering which must be incurred by such a change. That suffering in a great degree, although it may be limited to particular classes, has in some instances been even severer than we anticipated; but, sir, I deny that, at any time those laws were passed, either I or the bulk of those with whom I have the honour to act have ever maintained a recurrence to the same laws that regulated those industries previous to 1846. You cannot recall a single speech to that effect; I defy anybody to quote any speech that I ever made, or any sentence that I ever uttered, that recommended such a course as desirable or possible. Why, what is your charge against my Lord Derby? You say that he recommended a fixed duty, and now that he has intimated his belief that the country would not support such a policy. Well, but is a fixed duty a recurrence to the laws which regulated the introduction of corn or sugar prior to 1846? If my Lord Derby had declared that he counselled a recurrence to those laws, don't you think that you would be ready to refer to his speeches—that night after night you would din in our ears your quotations from what he said? I defy you to produce a single sentence of the kind.

“When we come to this question of a fixed duty, that is talked of so much, I must say now what I said before in this House, that I will not pin my political career on any policy which is not, after all, a principle, but a measure. . . . Our wish is, that the interests which we believe were unjustly treated in 1846 should receive the justice which they deserve, with as little injury to those who may have benefited more than they were entitled as it is possible for human wisdom to devise. Sir, I call that reconciling the interests of the consumer and the producer, when you do not permit the consumer to flourish by placing unjust taxes upon the producer; while at the same time you resort to no tax which gives to the producer an unjust and artificial price for his productions. Those are the views which we supported in opposition. Those are the views which we are resolved, if possible, to carry into effect. Our object is to do justice to those classes, towards whom we believe that in 1846 you acted unjustly; and we attempt to do that without disturbing the system which is now established. Sir, I believe that the country will support these views. I believe that that temperate, that remedial, and that purely conciliatory policy will be by the country ratified. And when the noble lord, the member for the city of London, talks of our being a party without principles, why, he seems plainly to admit that he is an Opposition without a cry. In his woefulness he confesses his desolation; no principle, no opinion, no movement, no agitation. What is left to the noble lord? With the imagination of a poet—for he is still a poet—at his last gasp, to my great surprise he discovered a resource. ‘Something,’ says the noble lord, ‘we must rally round. We must rally round the only thing that is left to us, that profound apophthegm of the right hon. gentleman, the member for Ripon’ (Sir James Graham). The right hon. gentleman has emblazoned on his standard the original, the inspiring inscription, ‘Don’t put any

confidence in Lord Derby.' A year ago was emblazoned on that self-same standard, 'Do not trust in the noble lord, the member for the city of London.' Sir, we shall survive the want of confidence reposed in us by the right hon. gentleman, the member for Ripon; and if the only way in which the noble lord thinks he can make the present government unpopular—if the only mode by which he thinks he can unseat the present administration—is by announcing to the country that it does not possess the confidence of the right hon. gentleman, the member for Ripon, why then, sir, I must express my heartfelt conviction that this time next year we shall still have the honour of serving Her Majesty."

The confidence of Mr. Disraeli in the Conservatism of the country was soon to be put to the test. Before the summer heat had made St. Stephen's an infliction, causing its members to look fondly forward to the breezes of the moors or the delights of country-house life, parliament had been dissolved. In marked contrast to the incapacity of the late government, all the measures which the Derby cabinet had proposed had been disposed of before the end of June. The pages of the statute-book clearly proved not only the ability, but the activity of ministers, in spite of interruption and all the tactics of obstruction. The militia act had become law; a constitution had been granted to the distant island of New Zealand; various reforms had been effected in our courts of law and equity, notably an act to diminish the technicalities of special pleading and to amend the procedure in the common law courts; the abolition of the office of the masters had remedied some of the grievances complained of by societies in the court of chancery; the jurisdiction of the county courts had been extended; whilst true to his maxim, *Sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas est*, Mr. Disraeli had seen that two acts for the improvement of the water supply of the metropolis and the restriction of intramural interments were carried.

The success of the government in thus effectively dealing with public business was made the subject of comment by Lord Lyndhurst, who referred to the past labours of the session in complimentary language. After stating that the large number of public measures and the vast amount of private business pending at the beginning of the session had been disposed of, he said he thought it his duty to come down to the House to congratulate the cabinet and the country on the course pursued by his noble friend at the head of the government. "I thank my noble friend," he said, "for the firmness with which he resisted those repeated attacks which were made—those clamours which were raised on account of his resisting the cry for an immediate dissolution. It was of the greatest importance to the country that the proceedings to which I refer should have taken place. I may venture to say further, that during the four months that have elapsed since my noble friend came into office, bills of greater importance have passed your Lordships' House than have passed during any session since the commencement of the present parliament; and I am sure my humble thanks and the thanks of the country are due to my noble friend for having resisted the clamours that were raised."

"If the government," said Lord Derby in reply, "are entitled to any praise, it is for what my noble and learned friend has given us credit, namely, for having resisted importunity from various quarters, urging us in the most vehement manner to dissolve parliament, at a time when it would have been extremely convenient for us personally to have dissolved; but we refrained from advising that step, seeing that a dissolution of parliament at that moment would have involved the country in great present inconvenience, and possibly, or even probably, would have led to the postponement, if not the loss, of many useful measures which we thought it our bounden duty to attempt to carry into law. . . . I stated at the commencement of the session that we

should endeavour to abstain, as far as possible, from all topics of a party or controversial character; and if we deserve credit for anything, it is for having formed a just estimate of that degree of public spirit which we believe would prevail in this and the other House of parliament, if they would permit us to act upon the principle we had announced, of not urging measures which might lead to controversy, and inviting them to join with us, forgetful and regardless of party considerations, in urging forward those measures which, apart from all party feeling, were imperatively demanded for the benefit of the country—involving the promotion of the military defences of the country, a vast improvement in the courts of law and equity, and provisions for the sanitary welfare of the metropolis. My lords, I am happy to say that this and the other House of parliament have fully justified the estimate we formed in that respect; and although the expectation that it would be possible to pass all these bills—nay, I almost say to pass any of them—was treated in the first instance with a species of contemptuous ridicule, I have the satisfaction to say, at the close of one of the shortest sessions on record, that not one of these great objects remains unaccomplished; and if this government should cease to exist from the day on which I am speaking, it would be a source of unfeigned satisfaction and gratification to me, that the four months during which we have held office have been marked by the passing of as many important measures, and as beneficial to the public interest, as under any previous administration, however strong and powerful.”

Parliament was dismissed July 1, 1852. “It is my intention,” said Her Majesty, addressing both Houses, “without delay to dissolve this present parliament; and it is my earnest prayer that in the exercise of the high functions which, according to our free constitution, will devolve upon the several constituencies, they may be directed by an all-wise Providence to the selection

of representatives whose wisdom and patriotism may aid me in my unceasing endeavours to sustain the honour and dignity of my crown, to uphold the Protestant institutions of the country and the civil and religious liberty which is their natural result, to extend and improve the national education, to develop and encourage industry, art, and science, and to elevate the moral and social condition, and thereby promote the welfare and happiness of my people.”

During the autumn the country was the battle-ground on which was contested the struggle for victory between the opposing forces of Protection and free trade. Manipulated statistics, false conclusions, and garbled extracts were freely circulated by both sides; and all was deemed fair that led to triumph.

A few days after the dissolution, July 14, Mr. Disraeli met a large body of his constituents at dinner at Newport Pagnel. He took the opportunity to lay before his audience the latest development of his views respecting “protection,” “the better adjustment of agricultural burdens,” “a fixed duty upon corn,” and the “new principle of justice to the cultivators of the soil.” After a few prefatory remarks he proceeded to say:—“Gentlemen, when I addressed you last as your member in this room, you will remember what was then the position of the Opposition of that day. It was one of great difficulty. The change of 1846 was a change of the most remarkable description. I was, among others, opposed to that change. I thought the risk of that change was too great under the circumstances—too great for this country to incur. I thought the disturbing circumstances, so far as the agricultural interests were concerned, which that change would produce were not a matter of theory—that they were inevitable, and that no one had a right to incur the responsibility of voting for a change so unpremeditated, so insecure, and so inconsistent; and I must say, gentlemen, that every subsequent session of parliament has perfectly fortified the opinion

I then formed. I knew—all knew—the effects of that change upon our position. We all knew that we should have very great difficulty to regain the position we had lost. At all times it is difficult to regain a position which is forfeited; and I stated years ago my individual conviction of that sound policy which it was your duty to follow.

“But, gentlemen, your opponents were ever anxious that you should pursue a false policy. They have always said, ‘Ask only for that which it is impossible to get, and then you will occupy a sensible position.’ But, gentlemen, we occupy safe ground by demanding that which is truly practicable, instead of following the tactics of an Opposition which would, in the precipitancy of their strong convictions, knock their brains against the first opposing wall they meet. I told you to form your views a little more deep than foolish. I said ‘There is great agricultural distress in consequence of a change in the law: your opponents taunt you when you seek to go back to that law, and they are all-sufficient in their opposition. I want you to ascertain what is the cause of your suffering, and if possible to accept the new policy, and to consider what recompense you can find in other measures.’

“Gentlemen, that was the advice I presumed to give, and it is a question most interesting to the numerous and influential body assembled here to-day. I say, what is the reason the English producer, the English occupier of land, cannot compete with the foreign producer or occupier of land? I have always said—and I don’t know that I have ever heard any argument of an intelligent opponent that I could really refer to as in any way conclusive against it—I have always said the reason is ‘that the English producer is under a system of taxation—a system which is, in general, applied to himself—which is in particular applied to the class to which he belongs—entailing upon him burdens which do not allow him to run the race on equal terms with the

others.’ That is what I said. And, gentlemen, I have also said that the protectionist system was not to be justified unless you can show these circumstances exist. And I still believe these circumstances do exist in the country, however much they may be modified, and that the principle of Protection is sound—that in a society which is artificial, in which there exists a financial system so complicated as our own, it was much better to adhere to compensating arrangements for the protection of the cultivator of the soil than that you should madly leave him an unequal competitor with the foreigner. And this principle, I say, is always to be modified according to existing circumstances. But, gentlemen, the protective principle was not only a sound one, but it was a principle to the advantage of the country, and the only principle upon which our present system of finance could be vindicated. You could not vindicate a system that rested individually and mainly upon the cultivators of the soil, unless in its operation it gave some compensatory relief to those whom it placed under particular restrictions. Well, I say, gentlemen, if the country has chosen to abrogate that system, and if the majority of the people of this country are of opinion it would be unwise to recur to it, I say we must seek by other means, and in another direction, to place the cultivators of the soil in a fair and just position.

“Now, gentlemen, that is all I have ever said. It is what I am perfectly ready to maintain. I said it in Opposition as your member; and I say now, as a minister of the crown, I am perfectly prepared to advise Her Majesty to carry it out. Now, gentlemen, it has sometimes been said that the policy I wish to pursue has been but of limited compass—that it referred only to the burdens entailed upon land by our system of unfair taxation. Well, in the first place, if there are any particular burdens on one class which the rest of society do not bear, I say, as a matter of principle, that there ought to be redress. But I utterly deny

that at any time I have told you that proper measures of redress were solely or wholly to be got by any advantage which might arise from the adjustment of particular burdens entailed by local taxation. Three years ago, in this room, I advised you to take that particular grievance into your consideration, and to work it out, because your claim for redress was founded upon justice, and because justice would be sanctioned by the great body of the country. And what has happened since I thus advised you proves that my advice was a good one, for many gentlemen in the House of Commons, who did not represent agricultural constituencies, voted for the motions I brought forward on the subject, because they could not withhold their approval of what had the high sanction of national justice for its support. But, gentlemen, I have not told you—I do not tell you now—that this would give you a sufficient, or that this would give you the chief means of redress. I say no. It is in reviewing, it is in adjusting the whole system of national taxation, it is in placing this system upon a just basis, that the producer will find that justice which the consumer—which every fair and upright man—could wish him to secure.

“Gentlemen, the old question was simply this:—You said it required a system of legislation which would secure to you an artificial price. You were always taught to believe that in raising prices you would find redress; and in my opinion it would have been very wise, not materially to have destroyed the old system. But there is another view of the case—another view of your position—another means by which you may obtain redress—and a means more practical than recurring to the past, which is beset with infinite difficulties. It is not to increase prices in order that you may have a fair remuneration for your toil; but it is to reduce the cost of production (*immense cheering*).

“Now, that is the sound advice which the agricultural interest must act upon.

You are told that it is one of the necessities for the prosperous condition of England, that the bread of the people should be cheap. Well, I say, take care that the producer of that bread shall be able to produce it as cheap as possible. Now you will find if you adopt that view of the case, that you who are the occupiers of the soil will more gradually get the feeling of the country in your favour, and at the same time more perfectly secure compensation for yourselves. It is, as I have said, in reviewing the system of taxation which exists, and in the adjustment of that system, that the cultivators of the soil will find that compensation which they have a right to expect from the abrogation of that law which gave them artificial prices; and I say, in accordance with the spirit of the age and with the temper of the country, let your produce now be raised upon the cheapest possible principle. But then it follows, you must not allow your native produce to be shackled by laws which hinder the producer from competing with foreign countries. It follows that, in the new principle of justice, the cultivators of the soil shall no longer remain the only class incapable of receiving a fair profit for their industry. It follows, you must take care that the same justice be done to all Her Majesty's subjects. And I am well aware, gentlemen, if the question be viewed in that light, and if taxation shall certainly be placed upon a new principle, I am convinced we shall be able to bring forward measures of relief which will receive the sympathy, and approbation, and support of all the various classes of this country.

“Now, I am sometimes told that we supported in Opposition what is called the Protectionist policy, but have abandoned it in the responsible position of the ministers of the crown. Gentlemen, I should like to hear that accusation made in the House of Commons by any of my opponents. You know very well I have never been one of those who asserted that any sufficient

powering opposition. We shall meet parliament prepared to do our duty, under a firm conviction that the country will steadily protect us. I will not conceive the alternative ; but, at the same time, no one can be blind to the fact, that the Opposition will create its organization upon revolutionary principles. Happy was the prescience of Lord Derby when he told the Whig Opposition that the pear was not ripe last year the Whigs were in office. They have shown us their character, and their policy has been received with universal scouting by the country : and they cannot, gentlemen, attain to popularity again except by calling to their counsels the Jacobin clubs of Lancashire.* But I feel, gentlemen, that the present government is necessary for the preservation of the English constitution ; but the future institution of the Opposition already peeps from its shell and develops its horns, and from that shell the Opposition cannot emerge except enveloped in the slime of sedition. A change in the institutions of the country will be the condition of its success ; and you must indeed be false to all your professions—false to that high spirit which Englishmen have ever shown—false to the traditinary association of your country—if you suffer an Opposition founded upon such principles to govern this nation. Well, then, gentlemen, when we meet in the county hall, on Friday, I want to know if you will support the principles and practices which I have so feebly detailed ? (Loud cries of *Yes ! yes !*) Will you be prepared to say, ‘We shall have justice done to the soil ; we shall have our legislation conceived in the spirit of the age, which is the spirit of justice ?’ Will

"It is my firm conviction that the government of Lord Derby will meet parliament in the autumn with an absolute majority. To me that is not a subject of doubt. And the Ministry shall therefore no longer have to meet a hostile parliament, or be restrained in its policy by any over-

“The hon. member for Manchester (Mr. Bright) has complained that the chancellor of the exchequer has described that party as a Jacobin Club, and has asked the right hon. gentleman for a definition of a Jacobin Club. I think I can supply him with one. A Jacobin Club is an association that passes its resolutions outside the walls of parliament, and then attempts to force them on parliament by an appeal not to their reason but to their fears. A Jacobin Club is a body of men that presumes to tell the legislature that unless their dictation is submitted to there shall be a war upon the institutions of the state.”—*Speech of Mr. Isaac Butt, House of Commons, November 26, 1852.*

you be prepared to say, 'We will have the Protestant constitution of this country preserved, not with the sectarianism of bigots, but with those who believe that Protestantism is the only safeguard of English liberty?' These, gentlemen, are the issues before you. Be prepared to fight against those difficulties and compunctions which an unwise and eccentric Opposition may create, and in the ancient spirit of the men of Buckinghamshire, which has conquered in times that are past, and which now, I believe, will carry us on to the higher triumph which yet awaits us."

Three days after this speech was nomination day. The re-election of Mr. Disraeli was practically unopposed. Dr. Lee, of Hartwell House, put in his customary appearance, and received his customary support. In addition to Dr. Lee, the Whigs had entered the Hon. C. Cavendish for the contest; but as we shall see from the result, the constituency had no intention to oust their two Tory members from the House of Commons. When Mr. Disraeli stood forward to address his supporters he was greeted with loud cheers, and much waving of handkerchiefs from the fair sex, who had no little influence over the Conservative cause in Bucks.

In reply to taunts that his cabinet had done nothing since their accession to power, the chancellor of the exchequer carefully recapitulated the various measures which had been passed in the late session of parliament. "I have no wish, however," said he, "to regain a renewal of confidence by an appeal only to the past. No vulgar sneers shall prevent me from following that path which I have chalked out for myself, or from attempting to fulfil those events which I feel are looming in the future. (A voice, "*What are they?*") Well, you ask, so I'll tell you. The first event looming in the future is that in a few days I shall be one of the members for Buckinghamshire" (*loud laughter*). He desired to have the renewal of their confidence, because it would assist him in carrying out, with the

aid of his colleagues, a policy which he believed would be most beneficial to the country. He had been taunted with the question of "Are you a free trader, or are you not?" He was almost surprised that the big and the little loaf had not put in an appearance. The time had gone by when those exploded politics could interest the people of that country. No one supposed that the present administration had any intention to bring back laws that were repealed in 1846. He disapproved of those laws, because he had always maintained that the English financial system was based upon a protective system, and that if they destroyed the protective system, they must reconsider the financial system, which was its creature. He was glad to find that even his opponents had come round to his opinions as to local taxation. Still he did not pretend to think that any adjustment of local taxation would give the redress that was necessary to the cultivator of the soil; nor did he think that in entering upon the question of taxation, they were to consider the interests of any one class alone, however respectable. He carried his views much further, and he looked with confidence to the moment when the government would bring forward measures which, from their wise and comprehensive character, would relieve every class in the country by the introduction into the system of taxation of principles more just and beneficial than those which had hitherto been its basis. He must defer to the fitting occasion and to the fitting place the details of the measures the cabinet were about to introduce.

"I am bound," he said, "as a solicitor for your favours, to state to you the general tenor of the policy which I should recommend, and the great object of the policy I wish to achieve; but can anything be more preposterous or more ridiculous than that I should be called upon to explain to the electors of the county of Buckingham all the details of measures so vast, as they necessarily must be, embracing the interests of a great com-

munity like this?" He told them what was the spirit of the policy that animated the cabinet, and from the result of the general election he felt sure that the government would be permitted to bring forward those measures and carry them through parliament.

The number of electors on the register was between 5000 and 6000; at the close of the polling the result was as follows:—

Dupré,	1999
Disraeli,	1968
Cavendish,	1403
Lee,	665

Parliament met November 11, 1852, and the Houses were opened by the queen in person. The sanguine prophecies of Mr. Disraeli had, however, not been fulfilled; for though the contest had been close, it was estimated that the result of the elections had placed the government in a minority. The following list, compiled from careful sources, furnishes what may be considered an accurate statement as to the balance of parties in the new House of Commons:—

	Total Par- liament.	Minis- terialists.	Opposition.	Doubtful.
English Counties,	144	113	24	7
Welsh "	15	10	5	—
Scotch "	30	16	14	—
Irish "	64	24	40	—
English Cities and Boroughs,	320	126	183	11
Welsh "	14	8	6	—
Scotch "	23	—	22	1
Irish "	39	13	25	1
Universities,	6	4	2	—
St. Albans and Sudbury } (disfranchised),	655 4	312	325	18
Total,	659			
Double return,	1			
House of Commons,	658			

Before the regular work of the session began, a sad but splendid act of homage had to be performed. Some few weeks before the assembling of parliament (September 14, 1852), the great Duke of Wellington had passed peacefully to his rest.

He had lived so long before the public, his bent form clad in its frock coat and white trousers was so familiar an object in the Row and down Whitehall, warrior and minister he was so completely one of the institutions of the country, that it seemed almost impossible for the nation to exist without him. As soldier, as diplomatist, as statesman, as trusty counsellor, ever ready to do his "duty," his deeds, his advice, his rule, had filled so many pages of English history, that the blank created by his withdrawal from the scene of mortal labours was experienced by all; even those who only knew him by sight missed him, and felt as if a kind of bereavement had fallen upon them. Reading his history, we are sometimes compelled to reflect whether we are not after all entering upon the regions of fiction, so splendid are the triumphs of the great duke, so uninterrupted his successes, so dazzling the glory that attends upon his services. What commander either in ancient or modern history can compare with him? No matter in what country, or against what foe, he was uniformly successful. He was triumphant in India, in Portugal, in Spain, in France. None could resist his tactics, his subtle stratagems, his skill in marshalling the forces at his command. His men were ill-provisioned; he was hampered by conflicting orders; an irritable Opposition at home did all in its power to thwart his designs: yet what a list of glories he added to the annals of the British arms! Assaye, Argaum, Ahmednuggur, victories on the plains of India which crushed the insurrection of the Mahratta chieftains; Rorica, Vimiera, Busaco, victories which expelled the French from the valleys and mountains of Portugal; Talavera, Fuentes d'Onoro, Almeida, Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca, Vittoria, victories which forced the French to quit the Peninsula; the battles of the Pyrenees, Toulouse, and the crowning triumph of Waterloo, which exiled the "despot of Europe" to the lonely isle of St. Helena. No wonder that when the

splendid general returned to London he was the hero of the hour. Coriolanus was never more worshipped :—

“The matrons flung their gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchiefs,
Upon him as he passed; the nobles bended
As to Jove’s statue; and the commoners made
A shower of thunder with their caps and shouts.”

As in the history of warfare the successes of the famous soldier had been unique, so in the history of rewards were his honours unparalleled. Victory after victory raised him step by step in the ranks of the peerage. The battle of Talavera created him Baron Douro of Wellesley and Viscount Wellington of Talavera. On the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo he was raised to the dignity of an earl. After Salamanca he was created Marquis, and on his return to England he wore the strawberry leaves as Marquis of Douro and Duke of Wellington. Three times had he received the thanks of parliament—acknowledgments often accompanied by no mean grants from the crown. On taking his seat for the first time among his brother peers, the lord chancellor, after returning the thanks of the House for his Grace’s “great and eminent services to his king and country,” thus addressed the noble warrior :—“I cannot forbear to call the especial attention of all who hear me to a fact in your Grace’s life, singular, I believe, in the history of the country, and infinitely honourable to your Grace, that you have manifested upon your first entrance into this House your right under various grants to all the dignities in the peerage of this realm which the crown can confer. These dignities have been conferred at various periods, but in the short compass of little more than four years, for great public services occurring in rapid succession, claiming the favours of the crown.”

Few men are excellent in a double capacity, and the great duke was no exception to the rule. As a soldier, he was one of the most consummate generals that warfare has ever developed. As a statesman, he was not even in the second rank ;

his prejudices narrowed his sense of judgment; he was too hasty in arriving at his conclusions, and he was often too unsympathetic and exclusive to interpret aright the feelings and wishes of his country. The two principles of his political creed were to maintain the English constitution as it was framed before the first Reform Bill, with all its unjust partialities and irritating restrictions, and to uphold the articles of the treaty of Vienna in their integrity. Yet he possessed advantages accorded to few statesmen, however eminent. He was the confidential adviser of the court; his opinion carried an enormous weight in the Upper House; and he was the honoured friend of every sovereign in Europe, and on terms of cordial intimacy with all the great foreign ministers. Thus he knew, from his personal acquaintance with the leaders of European diplomacy, what were the wishes and ambitions of every state in the family of nations. Almost to the very day of his death, when any important question was under consideration, the country was not fully satisfied until it became known “what the duke thought about it.”

“I was marvellously struck,” writes Charles Greville in his “Memoirs,” after a ride through St. James’ Park with the Duke of Wellington, “with the profound respect with which the duke was treated, everybody we met taking off their hats to him, everybody in the park rising as he went by, and every appearance of his inspiring great reverence. I like this symptom, and it is the more remarkable because it is not *popularity*, but a much higher feeling towards him. He has forfeited his popularity more than once; he has taken a line in politics directly counter to the popular bias; but though in moments of excitement he is attacked and vilified, when the excitement subsides there is always a returning sentiment of admiration and respect for him, kept alive by the recollection of his splendid actions, such as no one else ever inspired.

Much, too, as I have regretted and censured the enormous errors of his political career (at times), I believe that this sentiment is in a great degree produced by the justice which is done to his political character, sometimes mistaken, but always high-minded and patriotic, and never mean, false, or selfish. If he has aimed at power and overrated his own capacity for wielding it, it has been with the purest intentions and the most conscientious views. I believe firmly that no man had ever at heart to a greater degree the honour and glory of his country; and hereafter, when justice will be done to his memory, and his character and conduct be scanned with impartial eyes, if his capacity for government appears unequal to the exigencies of the times in which he was placed at the head of affairs, the purity of his motives and the noble character of his ambition will be amply acknowledged. . . . He coveted power, but he was perfectly disinterested, a great patriot, if ever there was one; and he was always animated by a strong and abiding sense of duty."

At the opening of the Houses, Her Majesty alluded to the loss sustained by the nation in the following words inserted in the royal speech:—"I cannot meet you, for the first time after the dissolution of parliament, without expressing my deep sorrow, in which I am sure you will participate, that your deliberations can no longer be aided by the counsels of that illustrious man whose great achievements have exalted the name of England, and in whose loyalty and patriotism the interests of my throne and of my people ever found an unfailing support. I rely with confidence on your desire to join with me in taking such steps as may mark your sense of the irreparable loss which the country has sustained by the death of Arthur Duke of Wellington."

In the debate on the address to the throne the prime minister, before entering upon the details of public business, referred to the topic which was then occupying the thoughts of almost every man, not only in

England, but throughout the civilized world. "My lords," said Lord Derby, "it is impossible that we should assemble together in this house of parliament without remembering, as Her Majesty has been pleased in her speech to remember, the great loss we have sustained. As I rise to address your lordships, my eyes naturally turn to the head of this table, and looking at the seat to which a noble lord has so appropriately alluded, I miss there one whose venerable form occupied that place, and whose gray head, resting upon his hand, upraised to assist his imperfect hearing, was listening with conscientious and laborious attention to the arguments of even the humblest member that might be addressing your lordships. Again, my lords, I see him rising from his seat, and amid the breathless silence of the House, in homely phrase, addressing to your lordships the thoughts of a powerful mind, which seized intuitively the very pith and marrow of the matter. Slowly and deliberately he gave forth those pithy and sententious maxims which were the result of his intuitive sagacity, of his large and matured experience, of his deliberate wisdom. It is, indeed, upon no light theme that I now speak. When contemplating the character of him whose loss we now deplore, difficult indeed is the task to do justice to its greatness. His unparalleled achievements in the field, and all his actions, marked him the great leader; his sagacity in counsel, his loyalty to his sovereign, his deep devotion to the interests of his country, his noble self-reliance, his firmness and zeal, his abnegation of all selfish views in consideration of the interest of his country—my lords, all these great and high qualities have already been written in the undying page of history; all these are engraven on the hearts and minds of his countrymen; all these have been honoured by his sovereign; all these have been liberally acknowledged and confessed by the world. My lords, he is gone. He is gone where human honours are worthless. Yet, my

lords, history, while recording his many virtues, will not be unmindful of one great trait that shone through his entire character. In all the vicissitudes of his long career, in the battle-field, at the head of his troops, in the councils of statesmen, in the cabinet of his colleagues, in the chamber of his sovereign, in the assembled parliament, unbiassed by the blandishments of ambition, and unblinded by the blaze of his own transcendent glories, steadfastly refusing to listen to the aspirations of ambition, superior to all bias of political party, in every stage of his career, his actions were marked by a simplicity and singleness of purpose, the never-failing characteristic of every great mind."

A few days after passing this graceful tribute of respect and regret to the memory of the illustrious deceased, the prime minister again rose in the House of Lords to propose a resolution in reply to a message from Her Majesty respecting the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. Thursday, November 18, was the day fixed for the interment of the remains in St. Paul's cathedral; and a select committee was appointed to consider the arrangements, so as to facilitate the attendance of peers. Similar proceedings took place in the Lower House. As leader of the Commons, it fell to the duty of Mr. Disraeli to deliver the following brilliant funeral oration. We give it in full, since it has not been reprinted, and is only to be found in the pages of Hansard:—

"Sir, the House of Commons is called upon to-night to perform a sorrowful, but a noble duty. It has to recognize in the face of the country and of the civilized world the loss of the most distinguished of our citizens; and it has to offer to the ashes of the great departed the solemn anguish of a bereaved nation. Sir, the princely personage who has left us was born in an age more fruitful of great events than any other period of recorded time. Of its vast incidents, the most conspicuous were his own deeds—deeds achieved with the

smallest means and against the greatest obstacles. He was, therefore, not only a great man, but the greatest man of a great age. Amid the chaos and conflagration which attended the close of the last century, there arose one of those beings who seem to be born to master mankind. It is not too much to say that Napoleon combined the imperial ardour of Alexander with the strategy of Hannibal. The kings of the earth fell before his fury and subtle genius; and at the head of all the powers of Europe he denounced destruction against the only land that dared disobey him and be free. The providential superintendence of the world seems scarcely ever more manifest than when we recollect the dispensations of our day—that the same year which gave to France the Emperor Napoleon, produced also for us the Duke of Wellington; that in the same year they should have embraced the same profession; and that, natives of distant islands, they should both have repaired for their military education to that illustrious land which each in his turn was destined to subjugate. During that long struggle for our freedom, our glory—I might say for our existence—Wellesley fought and won fifteen pitched battles—all of them of the highest class—concluding with one of those crowning victories that give a colour and a form to history. During this period, that can be said of him which can be said of no other captain—that he captured 3000 cannon from the enemy, and never lost a single gun.

"But the greatness of his exploits was, perhaps, even surpassed by the difficulties which he had to encounter. For he had to encounter a feeble Government, a factious Opposition, a distrustful people, scandalous allies, and the most powerful enemy in the world. He won victories with starving troops, and he carried on sieges without munitions. And as if to complete the fatality which attended him throughout life in this respect, when he had at last succeeded in creating an army worthy of the Roman legions and worthy of himself,

this invincible host was broken up on the eve of the greatest conjuncture of his life, and he had to enter the field of Waterloo with raw levies and discomfited allies. But the star of Wellington never paled. He has been called fortunate; but fortune is a divinity which has ever favoured those who are at the same time sagacious and intrepid, inventive and patient. It was his own character that created his career—alike achieved his exploits and guarded him from every vicissitude; for it was his sublime self-control alone that regulated his lofty fate.

"Sir, it has been of late years somewhat the fashion to disparage the military character. Forty years of peace have, perhaps, made us somewhat less aware how considerable and how complex are the qualities which go to the formation of a great general. It is not enough that he must be an engineer, a geographer, learned in human nature and adroit in managing men: he must also be able to fulfil the highest duty of a minister of state, and then to descend to the humblest office of a commissary and a clerk; but he has to display all this knowledge and to exercise all those duties at the same time, and under extraordinary circumstances. At every moment he has to think of the eve and the morrow—of his flank and of his rear—he has to calculate at the same time the state of the weather and the moral qualities of men; and all those elements that are perpetually changing he has to combine, sometimes under overwhelming heat, sometimes under overpowering cold—oftentimes in famine, and frequently amidst the roar of artillery. Behind all these circumstances there is ever present the image of his country, and the dreadful alternative whether that country is to welcome him with laurels or with cypress. Yet those images he must dismiss from his mind, for the general must not only think, but think with the rapidity of lightning; for on a moment more or less depends the fate of the most beautiful combination, and a moment more or less is a question of glory or of shame. Unquestionably, sir, all this

may be done in an ordinary manner, by an ordinary man, as every day of our lives we see that ordinary men may be successful ministers of state, successful authors, and successful speakers; but to do all this with genius is sublime. Doubtless to be able to think with vigour, with depth, and with clearness in the recess of the cabinet is a fine intellectual demonstration; but to think with equal vigour, clearness, and depth amidst the noise of bullets, appears the loftiest exercise and the most complete triumph of the human faculties.*

"Sir, when we take into consideration the prolonged and illustrious life of the Duke of Wellington, we are surprised how small a section of that life is occupied by that military career which fills so large a

* The critics of Mr. Disraeli, always on the look out to detect faults, found that this eloquent passage was plagiarized from an article written, so early as the year 1829, by, it was alleged, M. Thiers in the *Revue Trimestre*, on Marshal Gouvion de St. Cyr.

"An engineer," writes M. Thiers on the gifts requisite to make a great general, "a geographer, a man of the world, metaphysician, knowing men, knowing how to govern them, an administrator in great things, a clerk in small—all these things it is necessary to be, but these are as yet nothing. All this vast knowledge must be exercised on the instant, in the midst of extraordinary circumstances. At every moment you must think of the yesterday and the morrow; of your flank and of your rear; calculate at the same time on the atmosphere and on the temper of your men; and all these elements, so various and so diverse, which are ceaselessly changing and renewed, you must combine in the midst of cold, heat, hunger, bullets. . . . Farther off, and behind them, is the spectacle of your country, with laurel or with cypress. But all these images and ideas must be banished and set aside, for you must think, and think quickly—one minute too much, and the fairest combination has lost its opportunity, and instead of glory, it is shame that awaits you. All this undoubtedly is compatible with mediocrity, like every other profession; one can also be a middling poet, a middling orator, a middling author; but this done with genius is sublime. . . . To think in the quiet of one's cabinet, clearly, strongly, nobly, this undoubtedly is great; but to think as clearly, as strongly, as nobly, in the midst of carnage and fire, is the most perfect exercise of the human faculties." In extenuation it was said that Mr. Disraeli had read the article many years ago, had been much struck by it, and had committed some of the passages to memory. "All this is very natural," wrote the *Times*, who came to the defence of the attacked orator. "But why did not Mr. Disraeli give the name of the author? We believe it is not known. The passage is from an anonymous article in a review, probably, but not avowedly, by M. Thiers. To give the name of an authority is always difficult in a speech; much more so when it is a review or other periodical. But the fair account of the matter is that Mr. Disraeli found himself in the passage before he had time to affix the proper title-page, introduction, and table of contents. It is one of the evils of a well-stored memory that a man cannot help quoting; but nothing destroys the interest of a speech, and the confidence of the hearers, so much as avowed quotations."

space in history Only eight years elapsed from Vimiera to Waterloo, and from the date of his first commission to the last cannon shot which he heard on the field of battle scarce twenty years can be counted. After all his triumphs, he was destined for another career; and the greatest and most successful of warriors—if not in the prime, at least in the perfection of manhood—commenced a civil career scarcely less successful, scarcely less splendid, than that military one which will live for ever in the memory of man. He was thrice the ambassador of his sovereign at those great historic congresses that settled the affairs of Europe; twice was he secretary of state; twice he was commander-in-chief of the forces; once he was prime minister of England; and to the last hour of his life he may be said to have laboured for his country. It was only a few months before we lost him that he favoured with his counsel and assistance the present advisers of the crown respecting that war in the East of which no one could be so competent to judge, and he drew up his views on that subject in a state paper characterized by all his sagacity and experience; and indeed when he died, he died still the active chief-tain of that famous army to which he has left the tradition of his glory.

"Sir, there is one passage in the life of the Duke of Wellington which in this place and on this occasion I ought not to let pass unnoticed. It is our pride that he was one of ourselves: it is our glory that Sir Arthur Wellesley once sat on these benches. If we view his career in the House of Commons by the tests of success which are applied to common men, his career, although brief, was still distinguished. He entered the royal councils, and filled high offices of state. But the success of Sir Arthur Wellesley in the House of Commons must not be tested by the fact that he was a privy councillor or a secretary of a lord-lieutenant. He achieved here a success which the greatest ministers and the most brilliant orators may never hope to accom-

plish. That was a great parliamentary triumph when he rose in his place to receive the thanks of Mr. Speaker for a brilliant victory; and later still when at that bar to receive, sir, from one of your predecessors, in memorable words, the thanks of a gratified senate for accumulated triumphs.

"Sir, there is one source of consolation which, I think, the people of England possess at this moment under the severe bereavement over which they mourn. It is their intimate acquaintance with the character and even the person of this great man. There never was a man of such mark, who lived so long and so much in the public eye. I will be bound there is not a gentleman in the House who has not seen him; many there are who have conversed with him; some there are who have touched his hand. His image, his countenance, his manner, his voice, are impressed on every memory and sound almost in every ear. In the gilded saloon and in the busy market-place, to the last, he might be found. The rising generation among whom he lived will often recall his words of kindness; and the people followed him in the street with that lingering gaze of reverend admiration which seemed never to tire. Who, indeed, can ever forget that venerable and classic head, ripe with time, and radiant as it were with glory—

"*'Stilichonis apex et cognita fulsit
Canities?'*

"To complete all, that we might have a perfect idea of his inward and spiritual nature, that we might understand how this sovereign master of duty fulfilled the manifold offices of his life with unrivalled activity; he himself gave us a collection of military and administrative literature which no age and no country can rival. And fortunate in all things, Wellington found in his lifetime an historian whose immortal page now ranks with the classics of that land which Wellesley saved.

"Sir, the Duke of Wellington has left to his country a great legacy—greater even

than his fame; he has left to them the contemplation of his character. I will not say of England that he has revived here the sense of duty; that, I trust, was never lost. But that he has inspired public life with a purer and more masculine tone I cannot doubt; that he has rebuked by his career restless vanity, and regulated the morbid susceptibility of irregular egotism, is, I think, no exaggerated praise. I do not believe that among all orders of Englishmen, from the highest to the lowest—from those who are called on to incur the most serious responsibilities of office, to those who exercise the humblest duties of our society—I do not believe there is one among us who may not experience moments of doubt and depression when the image of Wellington will occur to his memory, and he find in his example support and solace.

"Although the Duke of Wellington lived so much in the mind and heart of the people of England—although at the end of his long career he occupied such a prominent position, and filled such august offices—no one seemed to be conscious of what a space he occupied in the thoughts and feelings of his countrymen until he died. The influence of true greatness was never, perhaps, more completely asserted than in his decease. In an age in which the belief in intellectual equality flatters so much our self-complacency, every one suddenly acknowledges that the world has lost its foremost man. In an age of utility, the most busy and the most common-sense people in the world find no vent for their woe, and no representation for their sorrow, but the solemnity of a pageant; and we, who are assembled here for purposes so different, to investigate the sources of the wealth of nations, to busy ourselves in statistical research, to encounter each other in fiscal controversy, we offer to the world the most sublime and touching spectacle that human circumstances can well produce—the spectacle of a senate mourning a hero."

The public funeral was not only the most splendid that England has ever accorded to

any of her famous sons, but the most impressive. Every shop throughout the kingdom was closed; in all our great cities business was suspended, and there were none so poor or so lowly in condition as not to deck themselves here and there with bits of crape, out of compliment to the mighty warrior who had burnished the arms of his country with a glory they had not reflected since the days of Marlborough. As the coffin passed through the crowded streets, every head was uncovered; not a jest, not a sneer, no repulsive horse-play broke upon the sorrows of the hour and marred the harmony of reverential grief. Gorgeous as was the funeral pageant with its sable trappings, its long line of private carriages, its host of distinguished mourners, yet the most impressive tribute to the memory of the great duke was the decorous, the orderly, the respectful behaviour of the millions that, coming from all parts of the country, then thronged the streets of London. In describing the events of that memorable day to his brother peers, Lord Derby took the opportunity of alluding to the good conduct on that occasion of so vast a crowd.

"When," he said, "we consider how large a proportion of the population of these United Kingdoms was for that single day crowded together in the streets of the metropolis—when you remember, as those at least remember to whose lot it fell to take part in the procession, and who saw it throughout its whole length and breadth—when you remember that on a line of route three miles in length, extending from Grosvenor Place to St. Paul's Cathedral, there was not a single unoccupied foot of ground, and that you passed through a living sea of faces, all turned to look upon that great spectacle—when you saw every house, every window, every housetop, loaded with persons anxious to pay their last tribute of respect to the memory of England's greatest son—when you saw those persons (those, at least, within the streets) remaining with entire

and unflinching patience for many hours in a position in which movement was hardly possible, and yet that scarce a single accident occurred to the most feeble woman or child amid that vast mass—when, throughout the whole of that length, not only was a perfect decorum preserved, and a perfect and ready assistance given to the efforts of the police and the military, but there was no unseemly desire to witness the magnificent spectacle, no light and thoughtless applause at the splendour of that spectacle, and that the people of England, in the awful silence of those vast crowds, testified in the most emphatic manner the sense in which every man among them felt the public loss which England had sustained—I know not, my lords, how you may have looked upon this manifestation of public feeling and good sense and order; but I know this, that as I passed along those lines it was with pride and satisfaction I felt that I was a countryman of those who knew so well how to regulate and control themselves; and I could not help entertaining a hope that those foreign visitors who have done us and themselves the honour of assisting at this great ceremonial might upon this occasion, as upon the 1st of May, 1851,* bear witness back to their own country how safely and to what extent a people might be relied upon in whom the strongest hold of their government was their own reverence and respect for the free institutions of their country, and the principles of popular self-government controlled and modified by constitutional monarchy.

"And who will forget," continued Lord Derby, "the effect within the cathedral? When, amidst solemn and mournful music, slowly, and inch by inch, the coffin which held the illustrious dead descended into its last long resting-place, I was near enough to see the countenances of many of the veterans who were companions of his labours and of his triumphs, and was near enough to hear the suppressed sobs

and see the hardly-checked tears, which would not have disgraced the cheeks of England's greatest warriors, as they looked down for the last time upon all that was mortal of our mighty hero. Honour, my lords, to the people who so well know how to reverence the illustrious dead!

"Honour to the friendly visitors—especially to France, the great and friendly nation that testified by the presence of their representative their respect and veneration for his memory! They had regarded him as a foe worthy of their steel. His object was not fame nor glory, but a lasting peace. We have buried in our greatest hero the man among us who had the greatest horror of war. The great object of this country is to maintain peace. To do that, however, a nation must possess the means of self-defence. I trust that we shall bear this in mind, not in words only, but in our actions and policy, setting aside all political and party considerations, and that we shall concur in this opinion—that, in order to be peaceful, England must be powerful; but that, if England ought to be powerful, she ought to be so only in order that she should be more secure of peace."

"O friends, our chief state oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that
blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no
more."†

* The date of the opening of the Great Exhibition.

† "Ode on the death of the Duke of Wellington," by Alfred Tennyson.

CHAPTER IX.

"UNRESTRICTED COMPETITION."

SHORTLY after the assembling of parliament it was very evident that the Opposition were resolved to have the question which had been so much discussed during the recent elections, as to the conduct of the government towards the principles of free trade, fully and fairly settled. Scarcely had Mr. Disraeli re-seated himself upon the Treasury bench than the agitation began to exhibit itself in the debate on the address. Were the government about to abandon free trade and support Protection, or were they desirous of upholding free trade and renouncing Protection? These were the questions put forward. The paragraph in the queen's speech as to the future commercial policy of the Conservative party was, in the opinion of the Opposition, vague and unintelligible.* It might mean something, and it might mean nothing; it "had been dictated," they said, "by the genius of rigmarole, and traced by the hand of mystification." Why could not ministers, they asked, write plain English? What was the interpretation to be put upon that curious expression "recent legislation?" If the working classes were well off, what was the meaning of the statement that something required to be done to relieve the injury inflicted upon the industry of the country? The paragraph, the Opposition said, was studiously evasive and deceptive. If the policy of free trade were

* "It gives me pleasure," said Her Majesty, "to be enabled, by the blessing of Providence, to congratulate you on the generally improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes. If you should be of opinion that recent legislation, in contributing with other causes to this happy result, has at the same time inflicted unavoidable injury on certain important interests, I recommend you dispassionately to consider how far it may be practicable equitably to mitigate that injury, and to enable the industry of the country to meet successfully that unrestricted competition to which parliament, in its wisdom, has decided that it should be subjected."

not to be reversed, why had it not been distinctly avowed in the speech from the throne? Why did not Mr. Disraeli, who had screwed up his courage to many points, take his physic like a man? why did he make so many gulps in swallowing this free-trade potion? "Why," asked Mr. Bernal Osborne, "did the right hon. gentleman, who was the genius and soul of his cabinet, condescend to be tied together with a bundle of incompetent marquesses and men who were at least questionable as to their principles, however honourable they might be in other respects? Why did he not say, 'I am a free trader; I hunted Sir Robert Peel to his grave; I maligned Sir Robert Peel; but I see that I committed a grievous error, and I am now a free trader?'" *Punch* represented the chancellor of the exchequer as a timid, shivering, little boy standing on the steps of a bathing machine, whilst Mr. Cobden, caricatured as a bathing woman wading through the sea of free trade, was employing all his wiles to make the child of Protection plunge in.

These questions were now to receive a definite answer. In pursuance of notice Mr. Villiers rose (November 23, 1852) to move the following resolutions:—

"That it is the opinion of this House that the improved condition of the country, and particularly of the industrious classes, is mainly the result of recent commercial legislation, and especially of the Act of 1846, which established the free admission of foreign corn, and that the Act was a wise, just, and beneficial measure.

"That it is the opinion of this House that the maintenance and further extension of the policy of free trade, as opposed to that of Protection, will best enable the prop-

erty and industry of the nation to bear the burthens to which they are exposed, and will most contribute to the general prosperity, welfare, and contentment of the people.

"That this House is ready to take into its consideration any measures consistent with the principles of these resolutions, which may be laid before it by Her Majesty's ministers."

Upon these resolutions a long and weighty debate took place. Mr. Villiers, as the mover of the motion, was naturally the first to open fire. He considered it most important that the House of Commons should come to some positive declaration on the great question at issue. He declined to wait until the chancellor of the exchequer had introduced his financial statement. He wished to know at once what was the commercial policy of the present cabinet. Lord Derby had consented to be tried by his country, and that statement was sufficient to justify the motion being brought forward. The prime minister had been tried, and the verdict had gone against him. "Certainly," says Lord Derby, "you differ from me in this matter; but if you only give me a little time I have got a colleague so fertile in his resources, and of such transcendent abilities, that he will soon prepare a substitute for you—something that you will be delighted with—something that, if he only is permitted to produce it, is sure to be satisfactory to all parties." He, Mr. Villiers, did not deny that that was possible; there were geniuses of that kind, particularly in connection with medicine, who discovered remedies for every sore which the flesh was heir to. Mr. Disraeli could no doubt prepare measures which would be universally palatable if he had only plenty of time to produce them; but time pressed, and delay was dangerous.

Nor had these resolutions been proposed with any factious object of overthrowing the government. "I myself," said Mr. Villiers, "am not disposed to attach so much importance to the existence of a ministry as some people are. I

have seen four or five ministries in office since I have been in parliament; and so far as I have been able to judge, there has been a strong family likeness between them all. The country never suffers very much from any of them; those who accede to power generally do that which they resisted in Opposition, which is pretty much what their predecessors did before them. My own impression is that no great genius is required to administer a government. I believe that all the real business in the public offices is done by a certain number of public servants—able and valuable men—of whom we hear very little, and that it must be owing to some lack of judgment, or some want of capacity, whenever a government becomes sufficiently unpopular to be displaced. That I may not be misunderstood, however, I beg again to state that in making this motion I have no object of displacing the ministry." Still, he far from approved of the tactics of the government. Ministers had dissolved the last parliament, the verdict of the country had gone against them, and they "bowed," as they called it, to the national judgment.

"Certainly," sneered Mr. Villiers, "I must say that a more convenient course for a party I never heard of, than that of dissolving parliament to obtain a verdict from public opinion as to whether they are right or wrong, and the adoption of such course afterwards. One cannot but be amused at it. To use a rather vulgar metaphor, it is merely 'Heads I win, tails you lose.' If Protection succeeds, so much the better; we are all right. If free trade is successful, we 'bow' to the verdict of the country; but at all events we remain in." The member for Wolverhampton then entered into statistics to prove how beneficial free-trade measures had been, not only to the operatives in the manufacturing towns, but also to agricultural labourers and tenant-farmers. It was perfectly true, he said, that farmers had very distinct grievances; there were the law of distress, the law of settlement, compensation for unexhausted improve-

ments and the game laws; but these, he asserted, were distinct from Protection. He admitted that the farmers had been a very ill-used class, but in his opinion their distress had been made capital of by the Conservatives for party ends. For the sake of the agricultural as well as the manufacturing interest, therefore, he desired to know what the commercial policy of the country was to be. "I do hope," concluded Mr. Villiers, "that the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, will not attempt to evade this real question by talking of factiousness, or by impugning my personal motives; but that he will address himself in a straightforward way to the question before the House, and that he will not sit down without letting us at last know what he does really mean. Already enormous mischief has been done by the course taken by the hon. gentleman opposite ever since 1846."

Thus appealed to, Mr. Disraeli at once rose to reply. He considered the speech of Mr. Villiers not appropriate to the occasion. Parliament had met, not to decide whether the corn laws or sugar duties should be repealed, but whether ministers, by their conduct since their accession to office, had fulfilled the pledges they gave both to the legislature and the country; and whether, having announced that they would defer their own opinion to that of the nation on a subject of great importance, the government had frankly or otherwise communicated to the Houses the resolution at which they had arrived. Mr. Villiers had said that "enormous mischief" had been done to the country by the course which had been pursued by the Protectionist party since 1846. If such a statement were true, he, the chancellor of the exchequer, was far from wishing to escape from the issue before them; on the contrary, it was his opinion that it was the duty of the House of Commons, if that charge should be proved, to express, in a manner which could not be mistaken, that parliament had no confidence in men who had perpetrated "enormous

mischief.' Under the circumstances, he therefore trusted, said Mr. Disraeli, that the House would allow him, in a calm and dispassionate manner, to trace the conduct of the Protectionists since the period to which Mr. Villiers had referred. He hoped that the Chamber would permit him to place before it, in an impartial and accurate statement, the principal parliamentary incidents which had occurred during the last four or five years, in so far as they related to that great question of free trade. He felt it his duty, not only to the government, but to parliament and the country, to enter upon these details, and he was sure that after his explanation the House would draw a very different inference of the conduct of the Protectionist party from that deduced by Mr. Villiers.

Let him, therefore, at the outset, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, state in a manner that could not be misapprehended, the principal reasons on which the Protectionists opposed the repeal of the corn laws as proposed by the late Sir Robert Peel. They had objected to that change on two broad and distinct grounds. The main ground was, that they believed it a change which would prove injurious to the interests of labour. That was the chief and principal ground on which he had individually placed his own opposition to it. Was it or was it not the cause of labour? That was the ground of the opposition of the Protectionists as a party to the repeal. The second reason of their objection was, that the repeal of the corn laws would occasion injury to considerable interests in the country. On a subsequent occasion, in 1850, when the matter had been incidentally referred to in the House, he himself, continued Mr. Disraeli, had used the expression with reference to the corn laws, that it was a question of labour, or it was nothing. After the repeal of the corn laws, there were two other great measures connected with that system of commercial policy, which was popularly, but very indefinitely described by the name of free trade, which

were proposed and carried. The minister who proposed the repeal of the corn laws and carried it was dismissed from office, and was succeeded by another statesman, who proposed the repeal of the sugar laws; but that proposition for the repeal of the sugar laws was not approved by the minister who repealed the corn laws. He mentioned the circumstance, because the question had always been argued as if from the beginning there had been two great parties in the House—the one banded together to carry what was called free trade in all the great articles of popular consumption, and the other marshalled for the purpose of opposing that policy. Shortly after the repeal of the sugar duties was carried parliament was dissolved; a new parliament assembled, under the management of Lord John Russell, and after considerable delay and hesitation another great measure, the repeal of the navigation laws, was proposed and carried. Then there commenced in due time the complaints of three great interests—the agricultural, the colonial, and the shipping interests. He might fairly say that the five years which elapsed, between the election of 1847 and the recent dissolution, were mainly engaged in discussions, or in legislation upon the agricultural, the colonial, and the shipping distress.

Now, continued Mr. Disraeli, let him put this fact before the House—it was a fact which might be convenient for certain members to forget—that from the time that the repeal of the corn laws was passed until the present moment, not a single attempt had been made in the House of Commons to abrogate the measure of 1846. Yes, and in spite of the interruptions with which that statement had just been received, he repeated it—he repeated it on behalf of that party which had perpetrated “enormous mischief”—that from the moment the corn laws were repealed until the present date, not a single motion had ever been made in the House of Commons to bring back that Protection which had been so unfairly attacked by Mr. Villiers.

“Now, sir,” said Mr. Disraeli in explanation of the conduct of his party, “let me ask what was the reason we did not bring forward a motion to question the policy of the Act of 1846, which up to that time we had consistently and honourably opposed? It was because we had laid it down from the first as a great principle that the fate of that proposition depended not on the injury it might inflict on any particular interest in the country, but on the way in which it should affect the condition of the working classes; and there being no facts before us of a sufficiently large character to convince us that the condition of the working classes had been injured by the act of 1846, we did not think it our duty to make any motion, when in Opposition, which questioned the policy of the law. Well now, sir, let me remind the House what was our conduct with respect to the other two branches of this great question. Did we—did the party who are said to have perpetrated ‘enormous mischiefs’—did we, on the subject of the sugar laws, act in that factious spirit which has been described by the hon. and learned gentleman [Mr. Villiers] who is himself so susceptible with regard to imputations of factious conduct?” Mr. Disraeli then stated that with respect to the sugar laws all that the Protectionists had done was to confine their exertions to a calm and elaborate investigation of facts, through a committee of which out of the fifteen members constituting it only three were Protectionists, and that the result of the investigation was to cause the Conservatives who were then in Opposition materially to influence the policy of the minister of the day.* The conduct of the Protectionists had been the same towards the navigation laws; they had opposed the repeal, but never had they once attempted

* Owing to the statements of this committee Lord John Russell was compelled to admit that his legislation on the subject of the sugar duties had been “rash and hasty,” and he therefore begged leave to introduce immediately a bill to suspend the change of duty, and to prolong the Protection which he himself had taken away.

to abrogate the decision of the House. On what grounds was the charge, then, sustained that since 1846 the Protectionists had been guilty of "enormous mischief?"

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to give a history of the efforts of his followers since the repeal of the laws relating to the three great measures he had alluded to. On the general election of 1847 taking place, the organization of political parties had been entirely broken up; very high prices for all kinds of farm produce, from peculiar circumstances, then existed; and the opinions which influenced the constituent body on that occasion could hardly be said to have had any reference to the merits or the principles of recent legislation. A large Protectionist party had, indeed, been returned to that House from a feeling which always animated great bodies of people in the country, who thought they owed sympathy or gratitude to those who had fought their battles or carried their colours. Still, it was very well known that at the election of 1847 the economical controversy was not at all entered into, at least by the farmers. The farmers were then, said Mr. Disraeli, receiving high prices, and political parties were in a state of disorganization; and although a large party had been returned to the House in favour of the agricultural interest, the fact was that no pressure from that interest, or from any of the cultivators of the soil, was made to induce their advocates in that House to bring forward their complaints.

However, in 1850 the pinch which the Conservatives had foreseen not only commenced, but was in acute operation. What was now the conduct of the party which had perpetrated "enormous mischief?" The Protectionists were then appealed to by their constituents, who loudly complained of the great losses and sufferings they endured. What was the course the Conservative party took? Did they come forward and demand the restoration of Protection? On the contrary, they said they opposed the repeal of the corn laws

on two grounds—it was injurious to labour and to the growers of corn. Still, as they were not satisfied that the interests of labour had been injured by the change, they could not lend themselves to the cry of the farmer, and demand the restoration of Protection solely on his account. However, they said this to the agricultural interest, "If you find your sufferings acute, if you find your distress is intolerable, if you find the cost of production not remunerated by your returns, we will consider your position with reference to taxation; and if we can relieve you of burdens which others are not subject to, or by any other means equally justifiable give you relief, we will do our duty to you in the House of Commons, and we will endeavour to obtain you that relief." In pursuance of that advice and at the request of his friends, he, Mr. Disraeli, brought forward in that House a motion of a remedial nature, which received, if not the sanction of the House, at least undoubtedly considerable sympathy.

Now, in 1851, a change of government very unexpectedly took place. In 1851, at the first moment the House met, continued Mr. Disraeli, he gave notice of a motion the object of which was to relieve the cultivators of the soil from the pressure of certain local taxation—not a measure to restore Protection, not a measure to question the policy of the repeal of the corn laws, but a measure brought forward with a distinct disclaimer on his own part of any wish to enter upon that question, and with a statement that he thought it most unwise to make that controversy one of public discussion in the House of Commons, and that any recurrence to the system which had been abrogated could only be justified by the overwhelming opinion of the country. He brought forward that remedial motion with regard to agriculture which was, he thought, lost in that House only by a majority of ten votes. He might say that the division upon that question displaced the govern-

ment from their seats, for although ministers did not resign office upon that point, yet on finding themselves a few days afterwards upon another subject in a minority they felt it their duty to resign; and Lord John Russell subsequently confessed that it was the division upon Mr. Disraeli's motion which had mainly decided the opinion of the government as to giving up office.

Lord Derby then came into power. "Now look to the position of Lord Derby at that moment," said Mr. Disraeli. "He was at the head of a party in parliament, one principle of whose conduct was, that it was unwise to disturb the repeal of the corn laws which had taken place in 1846, unless called for by the nation in an unmistakable manner. He had recommended that course while there was a most powerful party in the country discontented with the advice which he gave; and are hon. gentlemen to be surprised that there should be a strong party in this country favourable to what they call Protection, notwithstanding the course which we might feel it our duty to take in either house of parliament? We must remember that the farmers of England, according to the statement of the hon. and learned member for Wolverhampton, had at that very time lost upwards of £90,000,000 in one year. Well it might be perfectly wise, just, and beneficial that a body of English producers should lose more than £90,000,000 in a single year; but this I will venture to say, with great deference to all those lights of political economy whom I see opposite, that you may rely upon it that so long as human nature remains what it is, a large body of producers will not lose millions without feeling very much discontented at the legislation which has caused such loss, and without challenging the justice of the legislation of which they are victims. But you had something more than this; you had the great colonial interests of this country in a state of absolute ruin, and, in addition, you had the great shipping

interest subjected to unrestricted competition by a minister (Lord John Russell) who at the same time did not remove those burdens and restrictions which, only six months ago, he told the greatest commercial constituency in the world absolutely impeded its prosperity. Are you surprised, then, that there should be an important party—a party that, from their numbers and their great and ramified interests, may be fairly called a national party—who were discontented with the recent legislation to which I have alluded? Lord Derby, however, had made up his mind that nothing could justify a return to the abrogated system, unless the labouring classes were largely and permanently suffering.

"What, then, was the conduct of Lord Derby in 1851? He was called upon unexpectedly to form a government. He had to announce a policy which, while it showed sympathy with those great classes in the country, the sufferings of which are always proved by hon. gentlemen opposite, would be consistent with the principle he had laid down for his government, that they should not disturb the existing laws unless the working classes were suffering from their adoption. The programme of Lord Derby was one of compromise and of conciliation. How moderate it was I will show by recalling it to the consideration of the House. In 1851 did Lord Derby come forward and say, 'We must return to the sliding scale of 1846?' On the contrary, he said, 'I will propose, as regards the agricultural interest now suffering so much, that we shall have a countervailing duty, such as has been approved of by men of the highest character and authority upon such subjects. You acknowledge the agricultural interest is subject to certain peculiar burdens as regards taxation, and to certain restrictions as regards their industry. Well, I open books of great authority on political economy, and they tell me that a countervailing duty is the legitimate compensation under such circumstances.'" Therefore, in 1851, a mode-

rate countervailing duty had been the proposition of Lord Derby, and not an attempt to disturb the settlement of 1846. Mr. Disraeli now proceeded to show how Lord Derby acted towards the sugar duties and the shipping interest. With regard to the sugar duties, "all Lord Derby proposed was, that the descending scale of duties should be arrested, and that only for a time, while the colonies were suffering from the great trial through which they were passing." As to the re-establishment of the abrogated navigation laws, the prime minister had declared "that any recurrence in that respect would be impossible." Where, then, was the "enormous mischief" perpetrated by the Protectionist party?

Mr. Disraeli then began to state the reasons, already given in another part of this history, why the government had not immediately dissolved parliament on their taking office; he also sketched the utility of the measures the ministers had passed since their accession to power. He next proved, by extracts from the speeches of certain of the Peelite party, that that section of the Opposition had held very much the same views as to the mitigation of agricultural and colonial distress as had the Protectionists, and hence were equally guilty, if any were guilty, of having committed "enormous mischief" during the last five years. Therefore, on account of those reasons, he could not vote for the resolution of Mr. Villiers, which appeared indirectly to cast reflections upon the past policy of the Protectionists.

"I cannot agree to his resolution," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "and I will give you, if you will let me, the reasons why I cannot do so. I have to-night put before the House the case of the government; and if I have seemed to trench on the patience of the House, I hope they will be generous enough to remember that they sit in the character of a jury to-night; that in speaking to them I am appealing to opinion which will decide more important things than the fate of a government. It

is, therefore, fitting that whatever may be the decision of the House I should have an opportunity of putting the government in a right position, and especially with reference to parties who are, we are told, banded together to overturn it. I have shown the House that from the beginning we resolved never to attempt to repeal any of those three measures; that under no circumstances did we think the country could retrace its steps unless the condition of the working classes became permanently worse; that during all this time there was a strong and most suffering party out of the House—a party whose sufferings were not only acknowledged by statements made by ministers, but sympathized with by our sovereign. And we are told that we were not to encourage those men under all their distresses, suffering, as they believed, from the desertion of their natural leaders: that we were not to secure for them at least the constitutional appeal which, if they did not labour under misapprehension, would, they believed, give them the means of redressing their grievances. I wish to bring in no external causes for the course we took; but I can only say, as one returned to this House by my constituents, that I cannot comprehend the feelings which should have induced me to desert them in their hour of trial. Difficult as was the position in which we were placed with their suffering interests, that position was immensely aggravated when the chief minister of the Crown was frequently recommending the sovereign either to acknowledge those sufferings or bringing in measures of partial and temporary relief. How could you expect that these interests would believe your laws conclusive, when from the throne you seemed to regret their consequences, and were constantly meddling with the legislation you had yourselves proposed? I have shown the House that, acting on these two principles, we determined first that we should not disturb that legislation unless the working classes were permanently suffering; secondly, that we would by

remedial legislation mitigate as much as possible any just claims for relief placed before us—claims which I have shown that the leaders of almost all parties have attempted to alleviate.”

Mr. Disraeli next discussed the question of the dissolving of parliament. The government had resolved to appeal to the country and abide by its verdict, whether Protection or free trade was to be the commercial policy of the future. What had been the consequence of the line they had taken? The consequence had been that the Protectionists, having had a fair trial, having gone through a fair contest, and having been beaten, were not ashamed to acknowledge their discomfiture. If they had not had that opportunity there would have been for years a parliamentary party in the country, and in that House, who would have believed in the possibility of carrying out a Protectionist system of policy; and whenever a period of suffering, arising from any of those vicissitudes which would periodically occur, should have happened, the distress would have been attributed to the policy the Liberals were so anxious to support.

“Well, sir,” proceeded Mr. Disraeli, “having after the general election considered the verdict of the country, Her Majesty’s government felt they had but one course to take—frankly to accept and unreservedly to act upon it. But I am told that we have not done that. I am told that the language of the queen’s speech from the throne was not satisfactory. Why, certainly, we did not think it our duty to recommend Her Majesty to speak like a partisan. There ought to be a certain degree of reserve in the language to be used by the Crown under any circumstances. The speech from the throne is always recommended by the advisers of the Crown; but still it is the speech of the sovereign, and the sovereign might be called—even on the morrow—to use different language for a different purpose. For these reasons it has always been deemed constitutional and proper that the speech from the throne

should be distinguished by a fitting reserve.” Yet he denied that the wording of the speech was “vague and unsatisfactory.” It distinctly stated that the principle of their commercial code was the principle of “unrestricted competition.” “What the queen’s speech really said,” explained Mr. Disraeli, “was that if it should appear that recent legislation in effecting a great deal of good—we did not dispute that—had done some harm—we did not say that it had—then the House would take the matter into consideration. The good was positive, the harm only was conditional. Her Majesty’s speech contained a distinct affirmation that the principle of our commercial code was ‘unrestricted competition.’ That policy having been accepted by the government after due deliberation, the first minister of the Crown, on the first night of the session, announced the fact in the most explicit manner. I also made on the same night some observations in this House which the right hon. member for the university of Oxford” (Mr. Gladstone) “thought so strong, that he intimated hon. members on this side of the House, as Protectionists, would stultify themselves by continuing to support the government.” Surely such statements, remarked the chancellor of the exchequer, ought to be sufficient to proclaim the future commercial policy of the cabinet.

In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli the resolutions of Mr. Villiers were unprecedented. Let the House of Commons for a moment, he argued, try their justice, equity, and policy by parallel instances in similar cases. He would take first the case of that House after the Reform Bill, and the position of the government in 1835. Sir Robert Peel and his friends had offered to the Reform Bill a powerful and prolonged opposition. Sir Robert suddenly became minister in 1835, and when he was minister he expressed his determination not to disturb the Reform Bill, although he did not approve of it. What, asked the chancellor of the exchequer, would then have been thought

of the Opposition, if in a new parliament, and with a ministry in such a position, they had proposed a resolution declaring that the Reform Bill was a "just, wise, and beneficial" measure? Why, by such a course parliamentary government would be rendered impossible in the country! Suppose again, he said, that the followers of Sir Robert Peel were to come into office, what, pray, was to prevent them being met with a resolution declaring that the Ecclesiastical Titles Act which they had opposed was a "wise, just, and beneficial" measure? Ministers, said Mr. Disraeli, had fulfilled all their pledges but one—the assimilation of their financial to their commercial system; and they were now ready to fulfil that. Had it not been for the vexatious motion now before them the measures of the government would already have been brought forward. The present cabinet declined to be ministers on sufferance; they neither desired nor would they submit to carry on the government under any indulgence which was foreign to the spirit of the British constitution.

"Sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "I believe I have now said all that is necessary for me to address to the House; and I am content here to leave the case of the government. I have placed before the House, very imperfectly I can easily conceive, the whole of that case. The subject is somewhat large, and I have endeavoured to be as succinct as circumstances required. If I had only personal feelings to consider, I should sit down; but I think, without vanity, and speaking in the name of the government, that there is, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves placed, something which may justify me in looking beyond personal considerations. We believe that we have a policy which will conduce to increase the welfare, content, and prosperity of the country. I hope it is not an unworthy ambition to desire to have an opportunity of submitting that policy to parliament. But I am told that that is not to be the case. Now, although I have

too much respect for this House to condescend to advocate the cause of a government, yet I will say something on behalf of a policy. I will not, therefore, without a struggle, consent to yield to an attack so unfair as that to which we are subjected. I will not believe, remembering that this is a new parliament, that those who have entered it for the first time have already, in their consciences, recorded their opinions. On the contrary, I believe that they will listen to the spirit and to the justice of the plea which I put before them to-night. It is to those new members, on whichever side of the House they may sit, that I appeal with confidence. They have just entered, many of them after much longing, upon that scene to which they have looked forward with so much anxiety, suspense, and interest. I have no doubt they are animated with a noble ambition, and that many of them will hereafter realize their loftiest aspirations. I can only say, from the bottom of my heart, that I wish that, whatever may be their aim in an honourable career, their most sanguine hopes may not be disappointed. Whatever adds to the intelligence, eloquence, and knowledge of the House, adds also to its influence; and the interests of all are bound up in cherishing and maintaining the moral and intellectual predominance of the House of Commons. To the new members, therefore, I now appeal. I appeal to the generous and the young; and I ask them to pause, now that they are at last arrived on the threshold of the sanctuary of the constitution, and not become the tools and victims of exhausted factions and obsolete politics. I move the following amendment—'That this House acknowledges with satisfaction that the cheapness of provisions, occasioned by recent legislation, has mainly contributed to improve the condition and increase the comforts of the working classes; and that unrestricted competition having been adopted, after due deliberation, as the principle of our commercial system, this House is of opinion that it is the duty of the govern-

ment unreservedly to adhere to that policy in those measures of financial and administrative reform which, under the circumstances of the country, they may deem it their duty to introduce.'"

A long debate ensued. The Protectionists were perfectly willing to adopt the policy of free trade, since the country desired it; but they declined to support the resolution of Mr. Villiers, which was tantamount to a condemnation of their tactics in the past. Mr. Bright followed Mr. Disraeli. He denied that the Protectionists had not attempted to unsettle the legislation of 1846, and he referred to motions made by various members of the party hostile to free trade and the abolition of the navigation laws. The country, he said, had now been appealed to, and the verdict had been delivered against Protection. Parliament had been asked to pronounce the final judgment on the question, and therefore it was only right that Mr. Villiers, who for fifteen years had been the consistent leader of free trade in that House, should be the person to draw up the terms of judgment, and not Mr. Disraeli, who had been a Protectionist during the whole period of his career. Between the two resolutions there was, he considered, a great difference. The one established a principle, the other a fact. The one proclaimed the benefit of free trade to the whole country and the whole world, whilst the other left everything to hazard—it referred to certain injustice to be righted, to certain interests to be compensated, and to any amount which parliament might be induced to give. Remembering, cried Mr. Bright, the conduct of the Protectionists in the past, he declined to put implicit confidence in their future policy without express stipulations and conditions. Was it a fact that Mr. Disraeli and his party recommended the farmers not to endeavour to unsettle the Act of 1846, and that they had tried to put down the clamorous complaints of the farmers, as the question of the labourers was the only one involved in

the matter? Did not they, on his side of the House, recollect the speeches made by the Protectionists all over the country, and with what excited feelings their simple hearers had been sent back to their towns and counties?

The chancellor of the exchequer had sought to defend himself by referring to the conduct of Sir Robert Peel in 1835. When a precedent was quoted there ought at least to be some analogy between the cases. Did Sir Robert Peel, from 1832 to 1835, employ himself in that House, or did his followers employ themselves in the country, in proving that the Reform Bill was destructive of the British constitution, and that it was absolutely necessary for him and them to take the first opportunity of appealing to the country to undo that act? If Sir Robert Peel had been guilty of that, the very first proposition that would have been laid before the House of Commons would have been a resolution bearing to the Reform Bill precisely that relation which the motion now before the House bore to the corn-law repeal. Nor could he, continued Mr. Bright, omit to notice another mis-statement. It had been frequently asserted by the Protectionists that the corn law was originally granted to the landlords to compensate them for the special burdens which had been imposed upon them in the taxation of the country; or else it was for the purpose of preparing the landlords to endure some special burdens which the enactment of the corn law would enable them to bear.

What grounds were there for that assertion? He did not recollect ever having found, in the debate of 1815 on the corn laws, one single word that led to the conclusion that the corn law was then granted to the landowners to compensate them for any exclusive burdens that they bore. He had never heard of any chancellor of the exchequer imposing any tax upon the landed portion of the community for the burdens they had to

endure, or that the landed interest was well able to bear all their share of the taxation because that interest enjoyed the protection of the corn laws. On the contrary, statistics plainly disproved such a statement; no single tax had been laid upon land, or upon the landowner as a landowner, but all interests had been included in the imposition of the taxes, and none were excluded from the benefits which might result from the repealing of taxation. It was true that the agricultural class had sustained a loss. "We never pretended to deny that," said Mr. Bright, "but always said that it would be the one result of the repeal of the law. But if they have a loss, it is made up by increased production, by greatly improved cultivation, and extended markets for the sale of wool and animal food. They had also, like all the rest of the population, lighter burdens to bear and cheaper living, besides an enormous gain to all classes of our population who are consumers of agricultural produce at all."

The country, concluded the member for Manchester, had decided against Protection, and therefore the resolution of Mr. Villiers should be accepted, and not the amendment of Mr. Disraeli. The resolution confirmed the decision of the nation; the amendment was made with a reservation which might possibly involve them in hurtful and injurious consequences in the future. If the country, by supporting the resolution of Mr. Villiers, showed that the advantages of free trade were universally appreciated, it might bring other nations round to the doctrine, and so much more would the free-trade policy be advantageous. "No man of sense," said Mr. Bright, "imagines that government will attempt to restore Protection; but I believe it is for the good of the country and the character of the House, that we should establish, by a final decision to-night, that which was believed by the majority of 1846, namely, that the Act abolishing the duty on foreign corn was a just, a wise, and beneficial measure. I must call the attention of the House to the

admissions made as to the prosperous condition of the labouring classes in all parts of the country. Look at their employment, how steady it is, and how satisfactory their wages. Look at their moral and social condition, and observe what tranquillity prevails all over the country. Is that no compensation to you the holders of five, ten, or twenty thousand acres? Is it no advantage to you, even if you had suffered pecuniarily—which, as a body, I believe you have not; but if you had, is it no compensation to you that you can enjoy without the envy of any class your high ancestral position—enjoy it without the consciousness that some poor wretch is suffering in order that you may be rich? If you look at it in that light you will find, in the condition of the labouring classes, ample compensation for any injury which you suppose the repeal of the corn law may have inflicted on you. . . . I ask the House to sanction its own policy, to set its seal irrevocably on what it did in 1846, and by its vote of to-night to establish on a firm basis the charter of free industry to the people of this kingdom."

The government had frankly admitted their willingness to adopt a free-trade policy; they only objected to the resolution of Mr. Villiers since it cast reflections upon their past conduct, and rendered their position unnecessarily humiliating. Lord Palmerston, who, if once Protection were cast to the winds, saw no objection to serve under Lord Derby, thought he perceived a plan whereby the difficulties of the situation could be solved. He proposed an amendment, which, whilst confirming the policy of free trade, would at the same time relieve the government from having to consent to disagreeable admissions. He rose up and thus delivered himself. "Respecting the resolution of Mr. Villiers," he said, "there was not one word in it to which he could not subscribe." He concurred in the opinions it expressed with regard to the past, with regard to the present, with regard to the future. He thought the measures of policy

of which it treated were wise, were just, and had been beneficial. Therefore, if the motion of Mr. Villiers were put by the Speaker to the House, "ay" or "no," he would be compelled by his own convictions to say "ay" to that resolution, and to agree to all the affirmations which it contained.

"But, sir," argued Lord Palmerston, "I cannot but consider, also, not only my own convictions and opinions, but the opinions of others who are desired to concur in the proceedings of this House. Now, sir, there is a large party in this House who have entertained opposite opinions. That party have—honourably I think—yielded their personal and original convictions to their sense of what is the opinion of the country and of this House. I am far from joining in taunts and reproaches upon those who so yield their early impressions to the irresistible force of events. Why, sir, in a free country like this there could be no more dangerous doctrine to establish than this—that it is disgraceful to men to yield their convictions to the force of counter-acting events and circumstances. If every man in this country were to be chained for ever to the opinions which he entertained in the earliest part of his career, there could be no progress or improvement in the land. We meet here from day to day for no other purpose than to convince each other; and every man who endeavours to persuade people to come round to his opinions, debars himself, I think in justice, from the right of reproaching them when he has succeeded. Then, I say, that I think that, so far from casting reproaches upon that large party in this House and in the country who have surrendered their original impressions to the convictions which an overwhelming course of events has produced, we should consider that course as honourable to them as it is beneficial to the country. And the resolution proposed by Her Majesty's government does, in my opinion, contain the fullest acknowledgment of the benefits which the present system of commercial legislation has produced, and does pledge every

man who votes for it to contribute to render that system henceforward permanent."

He was at a loss to conceive, continued Lord Palmerston, how a man who voted for that resolution could afterwards shelter himself under any ambiguity in its language to back out of an opinion to which that resolution irrevocably pledged him. He really saw very little difference in substance and effect between the resolution of Mr. Villiers and the amendment of Mr. Disraeli. If anything, the amendment was in some respects stronger than the resolution, because it concluded with an expression of the opinion of the House as to what it was the duty of the government to do—a rather unusual thing he thought. For his part, said Lord Palmerston, he certainly should prefer the form adopted by Mr. Villiers in stating the readiness of the House to consider any measures which might be proposed in conformity with the policy which that House affirmed ought to be established. Still there was one passage in the resolution of Mr. Villiers which he regretted to come across, and which did appear to him to be fairly considered by the Conservatives as a bar to their acceptance of that resolution.

"Now, sir," said Lord Palmerston, with that geniality and good taste which so often characterized him, "all that the country asks of parliament—all that the country cares about, in my opinion, is, what parliament means to do in this matter—what is to be the principle upon which the legislation of the country is to be founded. I do not think that the country cares, and I do not think it has much right to care what may be the private opinions of gentlemen as to that policy. I think it is rather following the example of tribunals whose conduct we are not much in the habit of approving; it is somewhat like the practice of the Inquisition to compel people to come before you; and not content with declaring that their conduct will be in conformity with your views and inten-

tions, to force them to go down on their knees and recant their opinions, or to profess opinions which you choose to impose upon them. Sir, we are here an assembly of gentlemen, and we who are gentlemen on this side of the House should remember that we are dealing with gentlemen on the other side; and I for one cannot reconcile it to my feelings to call upon a set of English gentlemen unnecessarily, for any purpose that I have in view, to express opinions they do not entertain, or to recant opinions which may be still lingering in their minds. I will grant, if you like, that they still think that the measures of free trade were not just: wise I think they can hardly refuse to acknowledge them, when they say that those measures have mainly contributed to produce the improved condition of the country generally, and of the industrious classes especially; for it is hard, I think, to say that measures which have had such an effect have not been in their nature wise. I myself am of opinion that when the party who still call themselves by the antiquated name of Protectionists come to consider calmly and free from the irritation of former disputes the free-trade measures and their results, they will come round to our opinions on the point of justice as well as on that of expediency. But it is in my opinion unnecessary, and is nothing to the purpose, to know what they think as to the original justice or injustice of this policy. I should therefore, sir, very much wish that some middle course could be suggested, and that some resolution might be proposed which, on the one hand asserting in the broadest manner the determination of this House to further and continue the policy which we approve of, should, on the other hand, be free from those expressions which prevent the resolution of my hon. and learned friend from being unanimously adopted."

He considered the motion before the House should not be converted into a party question, or made the occasion for

a party struggle. If, argued his lordship, the resolution of Mr. Villiers were pressed, it might be rejected. Such a fate was not impossible; because he thought there were many members of the House, not only many of those younger greenhorns who had been appealed to by speakers on both sides, but many of the more experienced old stagers of parliament, who would be disinclined to convert the motion before them into an opportunity for overturning the government. He himself was one of those who held that opinion. It was a separate question altogether, and ought to be kept separate from any considerations of confidence or want of confidence in the administration. It was profaning a great principle of domestic policy to convert it into a mere engine of temporary party warfare. "And supposing that the resolution of Mr. Villiers should be rejected!" cried Lord Palmerston. "Why, it would go forth over the length and breadth of the land, and over the Atlantic to the United States, that the free-trade party was in a minority in the House of Commons, and that the verdict of the country, as expressed by parliament, was against free trade. People would say, 'You have a Protectionist House of Commons, and how can we possibly rely upon the permanence of a system which is at variance with the settled convictions and declared opinions of the majority of the House of Commons?' That would certainly be a great calamity, and was a thing to be avoided as one which would be very mischievous in its effects. And even if the resolution of Mr. Villiers were carried by a small majority, would that be a satisfactory result? Would it be a satisfactory result compared with a vote unanimously given, as it might be, he hoped by the whole House of Commons, affirming the principle of free trade as the permanent foundation of the commercial policy of that country?"

"I think that on an occasion like this," continued Lord Palmerston, "when the great interests of the country are the subject of

discussion, and when the decision of parliament may have on the one hand a most advantageous result to the cause of which so many persons are so honourably the champions; and when, on the other hand, evil consequences might be produced to the interests which they wish to support generally, I think we might all of us cast aside the feelings arising from the contest which is over, that we might accept the hand which is tendered by those with whom we have hitherto been fighting, and that we ought not to be too nice in requiring or compelling them to state what is the degree of conviction that has been wrought in their minds. If they consent to act with us, I think we ought to be satisfied with that; and I think it is ungenerous on the part of the majority, if majority there be, to endeavour to compel the minority to subscribe to opinions of which they may not entirely approve. Such a course in preventing unanimity, or almost unanimity—for in fact I should prefer to have just two or three voting against the proposition for the look of the thing, and for the sake of greater contrast—such a course would be, in my opinion, not only ungenerous, but it must fail of its purpose, and we only deprive ourselves of the authority which a unanimous vote would give to this House. I say, I think it is not only ungenerous to ask gentlemen to express opinions which they do not conscientiously entertain, but I think it is impolitic and unwise, as well as unjust—that we are defeating our own purpose, and depriving ourselves of the principles of a policy which we think essential to the interests of our country; we are depriving those principles of a great amount of support which is now tendered to us, and which it only rests with us to accept.” Lord Palmerston then concluded by saying that he would not at present move a second amendment with a third set of resolutions, but would suggest one which might run thus:—

“That it is the opinion of this House that the improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes, is

mainly the result of recent legislation, which has established the principle of unrestricted competition, has abolished taxes imposed for purposes of protection, and has thereby diminished the cost and increased the abundance of the principal articles of the food of the people.

“That it is the opinion of this House that this policy, firmly maintained and prudently extended, will best enable the industry of the country to bear its burdens, and will thereby most surely promote the welfare and contentment of the people.

“That this House will be ready to take into consideration any measures consistent with these principles, which, in pursuance of Her Majesty’s gracious speech and recommendation, may be laid before it.”

That form of words, Lord Palmerston contended, contained everything except the word “just;” and the insertion of that word would not prevent any ministry from giving “relief” or “compensation” to the agricultural interest. He left the suggestion with members on the Conservative side of the House, thinking they might be disposed to consider it as offered in a spirit of conciliation.

This suggestion led to some discussion. Sir William Clay wished to know first, of the chancellor of the exchequer, whether he was willing to withdraw his amendment upon the understanding that the House acquiesced in the resolution moved by Lord Palmerston; secondly, of Mr. Villiers, whether, on a similar understanding, he would withdraw his motion; and thirdly, of the chancellor of the exchequer, whether, in the event of Mr. Villiers refusing to withdraw his motion, he, Mr. Disraeli, would accept the resolution of Lord Palmerston as a substitute for his own.

Sir James Graham, before answers were returned to those questions, wished to make a statement relative to the share he himself had taken in framing the original resolutions moved by Mr. Villiers. He then narrated the communications he had had with Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell

respecting the wording of the resolutions and the changes they underwent, in which he had sought to retain certain words with the view of traversing a presumption arising upon the queen's speech, that the question of compensation would be entertained, and he had inserted the words, "*without inflicting injury on any important interest*," expressly to bar that question. He declined to be a party to any compromise if those words were omitted; but if they were adopted, he should beg Mr. Villiers to withdraw his motion.

Mr. Gladstone said that he did not think that, with regard to the question of compensation, the government ought to be precluded from bringing it forward by an anticipatory motion. The House might take one of two courses: either allow the government to go on with unfettered hands, or adopt a vote of want of confidence, which was the sound, constitutional course. He had intended to vote for the original motion, though there were reasons which would make that course painful to him; but the amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston had saved him from that alternative, and the interests of free trade would, he thought, be best served by the concurrence of the great body of the House in that amendment.

Lord Palmerston hoped that there was now a prospect of a general understanding. He had no objection to the words proposed by Sir James Graham if they were confined to the future. Both sides of the House must feel that it was of great national importance that the question should be set at rest. It was not a question as to the private opinions of the administration, but what the government meant to do; and all must see that the reversal of their late policy was unattainable. Let the House, therefore, calm the public mind, and, without criticising past opinions, affirm what was to be the foundation of their future commercial legislation.

Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, though he preferred the resolution of the government, thought it unnecessary to be very nice in

verbal criticism, and therefore recommended the resolution of Lord Palmerston to the favourable consideration of his friends.

The Marquis of Granby declared that he could not agree with any of the resolutions; they were a mass of mystification, which completely baffled him. He then added, emphatically:—If the country had been benefited by the commercial policy of 1846, and if the working classes in the country were better off now than they had been before, then he thought that some acknowledgment was due to the memory of a man whose patriotism he for one had never doubted, and the purity of whose motives he had never impugned. If that were true, which he denied, then some acknowledgment was due to the memory of that statesman—some acknowledgment that he was not only patriotic and conscientious, but that he was also far-seeing and sagacious. Lord Granby concluded by asking Mr. Disraeli whether he had not been throughout generously and without reserve supported by the Protectionist party.

Mr. Disraeli rose up and readily responded to the appeal of the noble marquis. "I have been reminded," he said, "how generously and without reserve I have been supported by the Protectionist party in this House and in the country. I can truly say, sir, that ever since I have been honoured by that confidence, of which till the last hour of my life I shall be proud, I have done everything that any ability I possess could command, and any energy I had could accomplish, in behalf of the cause of the land of England. I think it has been unjustly treated by recent legislation; but as far as the terms go which I have used in the amendment I have laid upon the table of the House, I cannot resist the conviction that recent legislation, so far as it has produced cheapness of provisions, has contributed to the welfare of the working classes. One would suppose from some observations that have been made, and from the derisive cheers which occasionally arise from gentlemen opposite

that a Protectionist government had suddenly come down to the House of Commons to announce that they had changed their opinions. I can only say that if any gentleman suppose that to be the case, he must take a very erroneous and perverted view of what has occurred.

"Here is a government which in no way succeeded to office in connection with that question. With the consent and concurrence not only of the House, but of the whole country, it was determined that the question of Protection should be left to the decision of the country to be declared by a general election. The verdict of the country has been of an unmistakable character. We have bowed to that unequivocal declaration. If we had acceded to office in order to advocate a system of Protection; if we had dissolved parliament on that question and found that the country would not support us, we should have felt it our duty immediately to relinquish the posts which we now occupy. But, sir, I am not aware from all that has occurred that it is at all our duty; and if there be any gentleman in the House who thinks it is our duty, and if it is the opinion of the majority of this House that it is our duty, that is an issue which can easily and speedily be tried. Sir, I have said myself that this was a question of taxation. No one has pretended, for example, that the native industry of any country has a right to any artificial support, unless it be subjected to some peculiar burdens or to some weight of taxation which otherwise might not be considered of an equitable character. If I find that Protection, as it is called, being now abrogated, it is yet possible to recommend to the House a policy which will relieve the interests that are suffering from the withdrawal of that system, and which will allow them to compete with the industry of the country as fair rivals, I think that that is not only a consistent course for one who has advocated the principle of Protection in former times, but that I am still doing my

duty to that party in this House and out of it who have so generously supported me; and I declare most sincerely that it is only because I think I can bring forward measures which will have the effect of relieving all those interests that have suffered from the precipitate abrogation of past laws, and at the same time of contributing to the general advantage of the community, that I consent for a moment to hold the position which I now occupy."

Mr. Disraeli then vindicated the passage in the queen's speech which had been so much criticised, and asserted that its meaning was perfectly clear and intelligible. The country had voted in favour of free trade, and therefore the financial measures he would shortly introduce would be based upon the principle of unrestricted competition. He strongly objected to the three odious epithets (wise, just, and beneficial) in the resolution of Mr. Villiers, and consequently should give them his unhesitating opposition. He considered that the phraseology of that resolution was injurious to the Conservatives, and as a matter of general policy unwise. "It is all very well to say," he remarked, "that these are only words; that many who did not think the legislation of 1846 wise and beneficial may be of that opinion now, though they thought otherwise then. But no one can have two opinions as to the meaning and the motive with which these words were inserted; and we are of opinion that in public, as in private life, it is a mistake to submit to insult." He, therefore, objected to the resolution; deeming it "unjust, ungenerous, and unwise."

The amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston was, however, a very different measure; and though, with the "pardonable vanity of human nature," he, Mr. Disraeli, might prefer the amendment that he himself had drawn up, still the two suggestions were really so similar in character, that it would be trifling with the House to press which was the one to be adopted. "With respect," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "to the

amendment which has been suggested by the noble lord, I confess, that although I may have that parental fondness which has been already confessed in the debate, I cannot feel that I should be justified in opposing the general feeling of the House in any respect whatever. In the noble lord's resolution there may be expressions to which I might demur; there may be expressions in it which I might regret to see placed on the journals of the House with my individual responsibility and sanction; but, after all, that is mere fighting about words and not about facts. I believe that there is no difference between us with respect to facts; that it is a mere question of phrases; and I certainly shall not oppose the general feeling of the House as regards any preference they may have for the amendment of the noble lord over that of the government. That is a question of very minor importance. The real question before us is, whether the hon. and learned member for Wolverhampton and his friends are to outrage the feelings of this side of the House, and of many gentlemen on the other side, by a course which I think, totally irrespective of personal feeling, is most impolitic and unwise."

The debate was not allowed to flag from lack of speakers. Lord John Russell now rose up to regret that the government had not advised Her Majesty to make a distinct declaration from the throne on the subject of their commercial and financial policy, respecting which the country had been so long divided. It had become, therefore, absolutely necessary that some member on the Opposition side of the House should bring forward a resolution upon that subject, and hence none was so fitting as Mr. Villiers. He himself, said Lord John, had advised the insertion in the resolutions of the words, "wise and just." The amendment of the government appeared to him equivocal, leaving it doubtful whether the law of 1846 might not be characterized as an act of injustice and folly, which should be reversed. Although Mr. Disraeli had

denied it, the question at issue really was, free trade or Protection. All who were of opinion that free trade should be persevered in should unite, if possible, in a vote to that effect. He recommended, however, to Mr. Villiers that, since Mr. Disraeli had offered to substitute for his amendment that of Lord Palmerston, he should declare his willingness to adopt that resolution.

Mr. Cobden warned members on the other side that, if they raised the question of compensation in the shape of taxation, they would cause another struggle as disastrous for them as the last. He was anxious that the House should bring the question to a test, whether, after a dissolution, they stood, in respect to the question of free trade, in as good a position as before. He therefore entreated Mr. Villiers not to shrink from dividing the House.

Mr. Villiers vindicated the course he had taken, and declined to withdraw his resolution. "It is because," he said, "there is evidently yet a serious difference of opinion upon the success of the free-trade policy and because the majority feel bound to declare their opinion, that I have proposed this resolution, and that I now feel bound to adhere to it as truly and simply declaring the opinion of the country."

On the order of the day being read for resuming the adjourned debate, the chancellor of the exchequer withdrew his amendment. Lord Palmerston now moved in lieu of it a resolution "that the improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes, is mainly the result of recent legislation, which has established the principle of unrestricted competition, has abolished taxes imposed for the purposes of protection, and has thereby diminished the cost and increased the abundance of the principal articles of the food of the people."

One of the most amusing of the party speeches delivered during this memorable debate came, as might have been expected, from Mr. Bernal Osborne, the wag of the House. He began by laughing at the

various amendments put before them; yet to his mind the only one they ought to adopt was the original resolution of Mr. Villiers. It was, he sneered, no question of words—it was not a matter to be left to the etiquette of the pump-room of Bath, or to a master of the ceremonies. It was the vindication of a policy—a policy which Sir Robert Peel commenced in 1842 and completed in 1846. It might be all very well for certain gentlemen to indulge in nice criticism, but they were there to consider what was just and right; it was a great question of political morality, and not a question of what was agreeable to the feelings of the Conservative party. He therefore expressed his surprise at the amendment proposed by Lord Palmerston, and still more at his speech. He was aware that some people looked upon his lordship as a sort of wet nurse to the present administration—who attended them in their infancy, and cherished them in their adversities last session; so perhaps it was quite natural for the noble lord to step in to relieve the British Protectionist when he was almost choking with their endeavours to swallow a crust of free-trade bread. He had a strong impression that the sympathies of Lord Palmerston would hereafter be enlisted more by the Tory benches than by his old and tried friends.

It might be all very well for the noble lord to say of his new friends and connections on the other side of the House that they were pursuing a politic course; but his lordship went a little too far when he contended they were pursuing a creditable course. For his part, commented Mr. Osborne, no honest politician could say that the conduct of the Protectionist party had been a credit to themselves. Why, in the first place, could there be anything more audacious than the speech of the chancellor of the exchequer? It appeared to him that Mr. Disraeli had taken a leaf out of the book of a great French character—no, he did not allude to M. Thiers, but to Danton—who when

asked to give a reason for his success said, "Audacity, always audacity." What had been the course pursued by Mr. Disraeli? That gentleman had declared that neither he nor Lord Derby had endeavoured to reverse the system of free trade. True, Mr. Disraeli never had possessed the courage to make a direct or specific attempt to reverse the free-trade policy; but the House must recollect the course which he allowed his friends and supporters to take. The country was flooded with pamphlets attacking the principles of free trade. Meetings were held all over the kingdom upholding Protection; and members went about from one town to another raging against the commercial system introduced by Sir Robert Peel.

Let the House, said Mr. Osborne, beginning to examine a bundle of papers, listen to some of the sounds emitted during this period of Conservative passion. This was what Lord Malmesbury had said:—"He hoped to God the time would never come when the free-trade theory would be consummated; but should it please God in His anger that it should be effected, then would this great kingdom soon return to her normal and natural state—a weather-beaten island in a northern sea." "If this country," cried another Protectionist, "were to continue great and free, moderate import duties must be established; the experiment of free trade had been tried and failed; common sense always said it would fail. He recommended the tenant-farmers to persevere; let each, when they returned home, tell their neighbours to persevere, and justice would sooner or later take place." At a meeting presided over by one of the members for Cambridgeshire (Mr. E. Ball), three groans had been proposed for Sir Robert Peel as "the arch-enemy of the human species." When Lord Derby came into power, a deputation waited upon his lordship, asking what he intended to do? And this was the noble earl's answer:—"If there be any," said Lord Derby, "who are of opinion that I am flinching from or

hesitating in the advocacy of those principles which I held in conjunction with my late friend (Lord George Bentinck), I authorize you to assure one and all, that those who represent that in my case will find no hesitation, no flinching, no change of opinion. I only look for the day when it may be possible for me to use the memorable words of the Duke of Wellington on the field of Waterloo, and say, 'Up guards and at 'em!'" When the member for North Lincolnshire (Mr. Christopher) was appointed chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, what did that minister say in his address to his constituents? "I accept office under the administration of the Earl of Derby from a conviction of his sincere desire to reverse that financial and commercial policy which is so injurious to native industry and capital."

And these are the gentlemen, cried Mr. Osborne, who we are assured have done nothing to reverse the policy of 1846, and whose feelings we are to be so careful not to wound! The chancellor of the exchequer was, of course, a safer and more discreet man; yet, said Mr. Osborne, it was ludicrous, when they referred to his statements in the past, for him to come down to the House and assert that he had never attempted to reverse the policy of free trade. But now they were told that Protection was one of those things which were obsolete and exhausted. Was the House sure of that? Was it quite sure that the conversion of the Protectionists was sincere? He for his own part did not believe that it was sincere; and he objected, as a matter of principle, to men carrying on the government of the country who were opposed in their hearts to the principles of free trade. He maintained that Mr. Disraeli, who had so bitterly accused Sir Robert Peel of bamboozling one party and plundering another, had no right to hold office for one moment to carry out principles which he had stolen from other people. He must say that since the lamented demise of that celebrated oriental

juggler Ramo Samee—a gentleman who was equally known for his dexterity of hand and his great courage—a gentleman who could alike cut for himself a hand of trumps and swallow a broadsword—he had known no individual with so many ingenious devices and such inordinate capacity of swallow as Mr. Disraeli, the creator of his party in that House. But let them, warned the wag, not be deluded by a great conjuror from giving their vote for what was just and right. They need not be alarmed at the threat of the resignation of ministers. That was an old threat, and sure he was that they all would "bow" to that decision. The time had gone by when there need be any difficulty in creating a ministry, and one use of the present cabinet was certainly to show how a ministry could be improvised. The House might depend upon it, that so long as the cholera did not carry off the government clerks, the government would be carried on. For his own part he had no confidence in the principles of Mr. Disraeli or his party. He therefore called on the House not to give their confidence to a gang of political latitudinarians who had no belief, politically speaking, save on the Treasury bench, no hope but in the perpetuity of place. He would therefore vote in all sincerity for the resolution of Mr. Villiers.

The debate continued to draw its interesting yet somewhat monotonous length along. Speaker after speaker rose up to add his tributary of talk to the general flood of criticism. All the arguments of the free traders followed on the same lines; the same well-worn theories, the same often-quoted statistics, the same reproofs as to the past policy of the Protectionists, were all launched forth and freely employed. The free traders could not understand why those who opposed them objected to admit that the repeal of the corn laws was "wise, just, and beneficial." Protectionists appeared to have no hesitation in declaring that the policy which had rendered corn

cheap—which had provided for the admission of foreign corn, and thereby made the food of the people abundant and cheap—was “wise,” and yet they would not avow that the Act of Parliament was a “wise act!” Surely such objection seemed to the ordinary mind a very remarkable refinement. Then as to the word “just.” Why should that term be a stumbling-block to the Conservatives? The corn laws had been laws not imposed for the benefit of any particular class, or to be continued on that ground; but as being, in the first place, in harmony with the general policy of the country, which was the protection of native industry—the protection, amongst other producers, of the producers of corn. In the next place the question was understood to be one of public policy, and that it was considered desirable to raise within the country sufficient food for the sustenance of the people. These were the great public reasons for the maintenance of the corn laws. Still, the moment parliament decided that it was not wise to keep up the system of Protection—that it was not wise to diminish the food of their own people, and make the food dear in order to obtain the advantage of having it all produced within themselves—from the moment such a declaration was made those laws ceased to be just, because they could only be considered just when defended on the ground of public welfare. So soon as parliament had declared that they were not for the public welfare—that none but a certain class, such as the owners of land, could profit by them, and that the great body of the nation were not benefited by them—the laws at once were stamped with the mark of injustice. Why then, asked the free traders, should Protectionists object to admit that the repeal of the corn laws was “just?”

And the same hostility to the word “beneficial” was equally ill-founded. The Protectionists had no hesitation in declaring that the improved condition of the country, and especially of the working-

classes, was owing to recent legislation, and also, that that policy should be further pursued. If, then, they admitted that great benefits had flowed from such a policy—that the food of the people had been improved thereby, and that great benefits had been conferred on the whole body of the nation—it was, indeed, impossible to understand the objection of the Conservatives to the word “beneficial.” What that party, in fact, really said, was this:—“Here is a measure which parliament in its wisdom has enacted, and which has conferred great benefits on the people; we admit the wisdom, the justice, and the beneficial policy of parliament, yet we will not avow that the measure itself was either wise, or just, or beneficial.” “It reminds me,” said Lord John Russell, “of a remark made by Lord Plunkett with reference to one of the scruples of Lord Brougham, when he said, it was rather more fit for a novel, to be called *The Delicate Distress*, than for parliament.”

Then, contended the free traders, it was surprising how the government could possibly regard the original resolution of Mr. Villiers as a vote of want of confidence. If ever there was a question on which the House was entitled to be quite unfettered by governmental considerations, it was certainly the one now before them; because ministers had told the people at the very commencement that the government had placed their own opinions on the shelf, and that the country was to pronounce freely upon the matter, without any reference to the private opinions of the cabinet. If that were so, why, then, should the free traders in the House of Commons be prevented from pronouncing freely their opinion of the policy and justice of recent commercial legislation, simply because ministers chose to put the construction of a vote of want of confidence on the motion of Mr. Villiers? The Liberal party was not being fairly dealt with by the government exhibiting such extreme sensitiveness. It was only right that free traders should give the proper

reasons why they supported their commercial policy—their verdict should be graven on the rock, and not written on the sand. It was not sufficient to admit that the repeal of the corn laws had cheapened provisions; it was not sufficient for free traders to defend their policy on the prosperity of the day. They must take higher ground, and advocate the repeal of the corn laws on the broad principle of civil right and justice, and on the basis that a man has a right to freedom of exchange. If they merely justified a policy on the ground of its rendering provisions cheap and the prosperity it produced; if, at the same time, they shrank from declaring that it was a just policy—who should say, that if from various causes provisions rose, or manufacturing or commercial distress overclouded the country, they would not be told that the time had arrived for the reconsideration of a policy which had been built on the cheapness of provisions, and the manufacturing prosperity it produced? Such a mode of dealing with a question would justify confiscation or repudiation. They might say of confiscation that it had benefited the parties in whose favour it had taken place, by their enjoying the property of those persons who had been robbed; or they might allege the same of repudiation. It was, therefore, necessary for free traders to contend most emphatically, that their commercial policy was not only a beneficial one, but also a just and righteous policy. The Protectionists might find that resolution somewhat bitter to swallow, yet the flavour would, to a certain extent, be counteracted by the sweets of office.

And after all, what a monstrous anomaly it was, cried the free traders, that the cabinet should tell the House of Commons, "We are going to carry out a given policy, which we admit has been attended with such advantages; but if this House should declare that that policy is 'just, wise, and beneficial,' we will resign." What did the government mean? Did they want to have an opportunity of whispering against and assailing

in secret the policy which they professed to be engaged in carrying out? Did they mean to adopt it, and then at the same time say that it was unwise and unjust?

These questions naturally led up to the charge, freely brought against the government by the Liberals, of double-dealing as to the manner in which the subject of free trade had been taken up. Ministers, asserted the free traders, had said to the country at the time of the elections, "Are you for free trade or are you for Protection? We shall be ready to bring forward protective measures if the decision of the country is in favour of them; but otherwise we shall assent to the free-trade policy which has of late been adopted." Such a move, contended the Opposition, was utterly impracticable with the working of the constitution and with parliament. An absolute sovereign could have said, "Let the people decide, and let them tell their representatives their own views with respect to commercial policy," but not an English prime minister. What had been the consequence? As the head of a party, it was inevitable that those who were joined with Lord Derby should take part on one side or the other in the elections, and thus they had had a most extraordinary spectacle and a most extraordinary result, because they had gentlemen going into the towns and saying, "We are against any tax on bread; we could not bear a return to the corn laws, and we support Lord Derby;" and other gentlemen going into the country and saying that the greatest mischief had been done by the repeal of the corn laws, and that they were for Protection, and, therefore, that they supported Lord Derby. Thus, laughed the Liberals, they had now a provision for a perpetual cabinet. Formerly ministers had been obliged to hold certain opinions, certain views, certain principles; and if the administration found that it was thwarted in those principles, when it thought they ought to be carried into effect, it no longer remained in office. Lord Derby had, however, acted differently. His case was this:—

"If the country approve of Protection, I will carry protective measures; if the country approve of free trade, then I will bring forward free-trade measures; but if I am right, and free trade produces great calamities, then I turn Protectionist again." Thus the same minister might be a Protectionist, then a free trader, and then again a Protectionist. Such an arrangement was certainly a novelty. Free traders knowing, therefore, who were in power, and the slippery tactics of ministers, should be on their guard; they should resolve not to have their commercial policy tampered with; nor should they be ashamed to openly avow the benefits that had resulted from its establishment.

So argued the free traders, one after the other; some supporting the original motion of Mr. Villiers, others—the more genial and generous—declaring that they would give their vote in favour of the amendment of Lord Palmerston.

The Protectionists, in their turn, were equally eloquent and monotonous in the vindication of their principles. None of them, they declared, had entertained a lurking wish that any import duty upon corn, either directly or indirectly, should be attempted. An appeal had been made to the country, and the verdict had been most decided; they also would ask their opponents whether the country party could have met defeat with better feeling? There had been no question raised as to the manner in which that verdict had been obtained, but there might have been. There had been no counter-charge of farmers deluded, though there might have been. There had been a quiet submission to a victory gained. Why, then, insult a defeated party by those three words—wise, just, and beneficial—which had been so properly designated as odious? Certainly there was no more odious dose for honest country gentlemen to swallow than a sentiment which was not their own. There was a great difference between an agreement as to what was the opinion of the country, and in adopting

that opinion as one's own. The country at large had upheld the principle of free trade, and the Protectionists were of opinion that it was the duty of every member of the House to carry out that principle. Why should more be required? They could not describe the repeal of the corn laws as, strictly speaking, a wise and just measure. If the corn laws were in accordance with the general policy of the country at the time when they were changed; and if all advantages were taken away from those persons who had hitherto enjoyed advantages in the shape of Protection, without removing any of the restrictions or impediments which existed in the cultivation of the soil—no matter how beneficial such measure had been to the majority of the people—wisdom and justice could never be predicated of any act unless it were equally beneficial to every class of the community. The measure of 1846 was not just. It was too sudden and precipitate, inasmuch as that particular interest which had been protected up to that period had not been allowed sufficient time to prepare itself for the altered circumstances in which it became placed. Adam Smith had laid it down in the "Wealth of Nations" that where by high duties they had protected any particular industry of a country, so as to induce the employment of a great number of people or a great amount of capital and labour in that particular branch of industry, humanity suggested that in restoring free trade they ought to do it "by slow gradations, and with much reserve and circumspection." In the repeal of the corn laws the free traders had not been actuated by that humanity, and therefore the measure was not strictly wise or just.

Nor could they, further argued the Protectionists, agree to the statement that the prosperity of the country was due to free trade. In their opinion the prosperity of the country had been much exaggerated. To listen to free traders, it would appear as if the present was the first time the country had ever been in a prosperous state. As a

matter of fact the prosperity of the present day bore no comparison with the prosperity of 1834, 1835, and 1836. Let the House listen to a few statistics. From 1831 to 1841 the population had increased ten per cent.; but from 1841 to 1851 it had only increased one per cent. Between 1815 and 1843 real property had increased nearly sixty per cent.; while from 1843 to 1850 it had only been ten per cent. From 1815 to 1843 personal property had increased thirty-seven per cent.; yet between 1843 and 1850 it had actually declined five per cent. From 1831 to 1841 their exports had increased thirty-five per cent.; but from 1841 to 1851 only twenty-three per cent.; while their imports of raw material and the consumption of wool had not increased nearly so much in the latter period as in the former. "I do not ask the House," said the statistics-loving Marquis of Granby, "whether considering all the improvements which have taken place—considering the energy and enterprise which have been elicited—considering the advantages we now have in the inventions of machinery, in the inventions for bringing out the wonderful power of steam by land and by sea—I say, considering all these circumstances and all the advances of the age in inventions and science, am I not entitled to ask if we are not, in point of fact, in a stationary state rather than in that state of progress we are entitled to expect?" Nor was this all. Manufacturers, in endeavouring to meet foreign competition, had been obliged to produce articles so worthless that they did not last half so long as those formerly produced when under the enjoyment of Protection. Had it not been, cried Protectionist after Protectionist, for the vast supply of precious metals which had been poured into the country, and for the large emigration that had taken place, this boasted free trade would have been a decided failure.

Therefore, holding these views—views supported by solid facts—the Protectionist party declined to stultify their conduct in

the past by admitting the accuracy of Mr. Villiers' resolution. The very year after the repeal of the corn laws there had been a collapse in the commercial world which had shaken credit to its very centre. In the crash capital to the extent of upwards of £50,000,000 had been swept away in a few months, and many of the highest and some of the oldest of the commercial firms of the country had been levelled in the dust. Money, wealth, prosperity, all had disappeared; the government had fixed the rate of interest for advances by the Bank of England at eight per cent., and in private transactions that rate of interest had risen, under the severity of the pressure, as high as twenty per cent. Yet that had been under this vaunted system of free trade! It certainly was an extraordinary and unexpected retribution that trade and commerce should have staggered under the first shock. Yet free traders still persevered in their system, and domestic agriculture was the next to reel under the blow. During the succeeding years an amount of agricultural depression had been experienced never before known. Agricultural capital had been swept away by millions, and the pressure had continued with increased and accumulating violence from year to year until Providence had opened to England those vast regions and stores of mineral wealth, whence had flowed ever since riches to an enormous extent. "Providence, sir," cried Mr. Booker, one of the members for Herefordshire, "and not human legislation nor any efforts or results of human wisdom, has removed the pressure and produced these blessings under which the country is now beginning to revive; and, sir, if the principle of Protection to our native industry and capital were now prevailing—firmly maintained and prudently extended or relaxed as occasion justified—I know of no limit within which our national prosperity would now be confined."

Then the Protectionists proceeded to dispute the soundness of the theory of the free traders as to cheapness. Cheapness,

they declared, was not a *desideratum*. Cheapness was no proof of national prosperity and welfare; on the contrary, in proportion as things were cheap the nation was impoverished. Cheapness signified much work and little wages.* What had Sir Robert Peel himself asserted when referring to the corn laws. "He had looked about," he said, "over the world, and had endeavoured to ascertain the proportion in which the people of various countries consumed, in order to ascertain whether they got more for their individual consumption of the necessaries of life where these commodities were cheap as compared with where they were dear. He found that in Poland and Russia the consumption was about five bushels of grain to each individual per year; Germany, where corn was dearer, six bushels per head; in France, where corn was dearer than in any other country excepting England, seven bushels per head; but in England the average consumption was eight bushels per head, and nearly the whole of that consisted of wheat."

Therefore, argued Protectionists, it was not only absurd, but a cruel thing to represent cheapness as a blessing. Let it be remembered, they said, that every article they ate, every beverage they drank, and every article whether of dress or furniture in daily use, was manufactured by the poor; and then to assert that those things should be cheap was opposed to common sense. Nor were the working classes dead to the fact. All over the country trades' delegates had held meetings, and they had resolved, firstly, that free trade had a most

pernicious effect upon the minds and actions of statesmen, was destructive of honest dealing, subversive of morality, ruinous to the national resources and character, and therefore ought to be entirely abandoned; and secondly, that the principle of protection to humanity, to the products of labour, land, and capital in Great Britain and her colonies, was the true basis of political and social economy, calculated to give employment and fair remuneration and profit on capital, and thereby to secure the peace and prosperity of the empire. With these resolutions staring them in the face, how could the opponents of Protection argue that the entire community—particularly the working classes—were in favour of free trade?

Nor was this all. Protectionists were asked to vote that the Act of 1846 was "wise, just, and beneficial," when almost every prophecy made by the free traders had not been fulfilled. "There was hardly anything," cried Mr. Ball, one of the most honest and zealous supporters of Protection in the House, "which the free traders had said that had not been falsified by the event; and scarcely a prediction had turned out as they had anticipated. Mr. Cobden had asserted that if the unnatural corn laws were repealed no Briton need any longer emigrate, and that emigration was created altogether by landlords and the corn laws. He had even said that those who were driven to emigrate were men condemned to transportation for the benefit of the landowners. Now, what was the result? Poverty had driven our poor by hundreds and thousands from Britain, and hundreds and hundreds of broken-hearted farmers had been condemned to a premature grave. More than that, hundreds and thousands of farmers were so hopelessly damaged and ruined by what had been done, that they could never be reinstated again. . . . He never would be a party to approve of any resolution which went to say that the happiness of the people and the prosperity of the country had been the

* "Now, there is one other great danger which working men have to look to, and that is, that the great staple industries of England should gradually be starved and ruined by the system of foreign bounties which every nation that is jealous of our greatness is now using to crush our superiority. Just remember that when they say your commercial greatness depends upon having cheap labour, that cheap labour means low wages, and low wages means uncomfortable homes, and uncomfortable homes dwindling families, and dwindling families means a poor mother of the household, overworked and crushed by undue toil, and the father in despair at the end of his days, closing those days, not in his own home, but in some great State-paid institution."—*Lord Sandon at Ormskirk, July 12, 1881.*

result of free trade. He did not believe it. But he would say this, that after the country had showed itself determined to have free trade, when he saw what was the result and what had been the response of the country, he was bound, as one of those who went there to make laws, to maintain and uphold the laws; and there was nothing more necessary for all parties to observe, than that when the people of this country spoke through the majority in that House, the minority were bound in duty to submit; and therefore he was compelled, of necessity, to say that he must submit. But he would not abandon the field if he were not to take with him the honours of war. He would not go out of the field if he were to be insulted, as he was going; and, therefore, he would never accept the resolution of Mr. Villiers. . . . The Protectionists had been necessitated to surrender the principles which they had advocated—they acknowledged that they had been beaten; but he hoped their opponents would remember that even the Indian who scalped his fallen foe did not lacerate his dead body, and that they would in their hour of triumph not forget the kindly and generous feelings which so universally distinguished the English character in such circumstances. And he said further, that if their real object was to obtain a settlement of this question, they would evince kindlier feelings and a better grace and endeavour to win their opponents over by harmony and good fellowship, so as to have a united testimony given to their principles. Then they would better deserve their triumph by the magnanimity of their conduct; whereas, by trampling on those whom they had defeated, and by manifesting such bitterness of feeling and pouring ridicule on those who had fought them valiantly and foot to foot, and would have beaten them if they had been able, they were only irritating the wound which they ought to seek to heal.”

So argued the Protectionists. They did not regret their opposition to the principles

of free trade in the past; they did not consider their objections to that policy to have been disproved; but they would “bow cheerfully” to the decision of the country. They based their arguments upon the views maintained by their leader. Where grave political questions were disputed it was advisable to appeal to the country and to carry out the verdict then given. The chancellor of the exchequer followed the course, on this occasion, which Sir Robert Peel had laid down as the duty of a statesman when called upon to sacrifice private opinions for the public good. Throughout his political career Mr. Disraeli had disapproved of the one-sided system of free trade which the country then was so warmly advocating. He considered such a system, unless based upon reciprocity, as ruinous to many of our most important commercial interests. He was opposed to any theory which tended to benefit one class at the expense of another. If other nations united with us in carrying out the principles of free trade, he would most cordially support such co-operation; but for England to admit the produce of the world into her ports free and untaxed, whilst other countries consented only to receive her goods on the payment of heavy duties was, in his judgment, to court ruin. Such a policy was not free trade, but commercial suicide. Those were his views, and he never hesitated to express them; Protection, in its narrowest sense, he had never upheld, but reciprocity was in his eyes a measure “wise, just, and beneficial.”

Still, the country was opposed to his opinions, and it was the duty of an enlightened statesman serving under a constitutional government to “adapt his conduct to the exigency of the moment.” He acted as Sir Robert Peel had acted when yielding to public opinion in the matter of the Catholic Emancipation Bill. “I cannot,” said Sir Robert, “purchase the support of my honourable friends by promising to adhere at all times and at all hazards, as minister of the crown, to arguments and opinions which I may have heretofore propounded

in this House. I reserve to myself distinctly and unequivocally the right of adapting my conduct to the exigency of the moment and to the wants of the country. . . . This has been the conduct of all former statesmen at all times and in all countries. My defence is the same with that of all others under similar circumstances, and I shall conclude by expressing it in words more beautiful than any which I myself could use—I mean the words of Cicero—*Hæc didici, hæc vidi, hæc scripta legi, hæc de sapientissimis et clarissimis viris, et in hac republica et in aliis civitatibus monumenta nobis literæ prodiderunt, non semper easdem sententias ab iisdem sed quas-cunque reipublicæ status, temporum inclinatio, ratio concordiæ postularent, esse defendendas.*"

In all great debates there is generally one speech which, for the grasp of its subject, the soundness of its arguments, the power of its analysis, and the brilliancy of its diction, stands out notably among its fellows. In this memorable free-trade discussion the chief honours among the Opposition were carried off by Mr. Sidney Herbert. His speech was not only an excellent party speech, but he concluded with a panegyric upon the late Sir Robert Peel, as loyal as anything that political devotion has ever called forth. Mr. Herbert had been a Protectionist, but had afterwards enrolled himself under the standard of Sir Robert Peel; the words that therefore fell from his lips on this occasion, though keenly critical, were yet, except when he had occasion to allude to Mr. Disraeli, generous and tolerant. He began by discussing the two original motions before the House, the one of Mr. Villiers and the other of Mr. Disraeli. Between these two motions he could not, he said, have a moment's hesitation. One was moved by a gentleman who had proposed that question to the House years ago, and who had struggled for it under great difficulties and in small minorities. He knew that Mr. Villiers had fought his battle with singular skill and consistency, and not without much labour had brought it to a

happy issue. During the whole time that Mr. Villiers had argued the question of the corn laws—and they were warm times—he had not left a single enemy on either side of the House. But in opposition to that motion of Mr. Villiers was a notice of an amendment coming from a quarter which certainly did not inspire confidence. The speech of Mr. Disraeli—able as it was—impressive in manner, ingenious in argument—left on his, Mr. Herbert's mind, a most painful impression. The chancellor of the exchequer had set out by stating that he was going to give an account of the course which the Protectionist party had taken since 1846, which should be studiously accurate and impartial. Yet no speech could have been more singularly inaccurate. "There are many gentlemen," said Mr. Sidney Herbert, "on the opposite side of the House with whom I have long lived in relations not only of private friendship but of political co-operation; and although I am no longer by party connected with them, I do not hesitate to say that their political reputation as members of a class which forms the chief element of stability in this country, and whose public virtue entitles them to public respect, is most important. It was not, then, without pain that I heard a statement made—a course described—which was, in my mind, an imputation of the deepest dye upon the character of those gentlemen. We all recollect the period that intervened between 1846 and 1852. Was the country quiet? Was there no agitation upon this question? At market tables—in theatres—at Protection societies, one hundred in number—was everything said with a view to secure the stability of the policy of 1846? For my part I acquit the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer, as far as his own convictions are concerned, of the charge of ever having been a Protectionist. I never for one moment thought he believed in the least degree in Protection. I do not accuse him of having forgotten what he said or what

he believed in those years. I only accuse him of having forgotten now what he then wished it to appear that he believed. . . But how will all this appear to the constituencies of the country? What will they think when they come to learn that a vast number of gentlemen holding very strong language upon the subject of Protection—delaying the re-arrangement of rents, which in some cases has become a necessity to the farmer, upon the plea that the legislature would revise the system which established free trade—what will be their feelings when they hear that their object in agitating was not the restoration of Protection, but to secure the stability of the commercial policy of 1846?"

Mr. Herbert then read extracts from the speeches of various Protectionists, showing that during the years intervening between 1846 and 1852 members had openly advocated a return to Protection. He, however, did not, he remarked, bring forward these extracts to taunt members for changing their opinions. "I am the last man," he said, "who would do so, for I am in no position to speak ill of converts. I had had myself to pass through that ordeal, to break up political friendships and to sacrifice office—whatever that may have been worth—because my convictions had been entirely altered on this subject, and because I thought it was not for a man of honour, holding opinions different from those which he held before, to occupy a station of responsibility, and to shrink from attempting to give effect to those opinions upon a question on which immediate action was necessary." He always felt that the principle of Protection would have to be abandoned; but then it became necessary to know who supported it and who deserted from it, and that brought him to the question whether a resolution, such as the one Mr. Villiers had proposed, was necessary. He thought it was necessary because, owing to the ambiguity of the royal speech, they had no other means of knowing the individual opinions of members of parliament

sent here to settle either the principle of free trade or of Protection. He could not accept the amendment of the chancellor of the exchequer. It was not declaratory of the opinion of the House upon free trade. It seemed more like a resolution to test a divided cabinet than anything else; with the duty and conscience of the ministry the House had nothing to do. It was clearly not the duty of the House of Commons to lay down what was to be the business of the executive. The only objection he had to the resolution of Mr. Villiers was that it did cast censure upon the Conservative party; and after all generosity was the best policy.

"Our system," said Mr. Herbert, genially, "is one of political propagandism—we are all anxious to make proselytes—and therefore we ought not to repel a man or a body of men, when they come over to our side, with hard words and terms of humiliation. I must say for myself that I should lament to see a system established by which when a person or a party, from the lapse of time or the occurrence of fresh circumstances, see reason to doubt the accuracy of his former opinions, is anxious to retrace his steps and to adopt sounder views—I should regret the establishment of a system by which such person would be subjected to personal humiliation before he was accepted as a convert. I recollect an observation made by a witty contemporaneous writer, to the effect that all religious sects in free countries succeeded in making converts except the Jews; and he asked, rather quaintly, how it could be expected that any man would become a convert to a faith, the profession of which must begin with a surgical operation? And in the same way I must say I feel strongly—being anxious to bring over as many as I possibly can to the standard under which I fight—that I shall not succeed if I tell hon. gentlemen who differed from me in former times, that their agreement in opinion with me must be commenced by their doing penance—by putting on a white sheet and

standing in the pillory for their former misdeeds." He would therefore give his vote in favour of the resolution of Lord Palmerston, which confirmed the principles of free trade, without being offensive to the party which had opposed them. Then in answer to the appeal of certain free traders that the memory of Sir Robert Peel should be vindicated, he thus concluded:—

"Sir, I think the memory of Sir Robert Peel stands on a pedestal, from which no counter motion, even if it could be carried in this House, could remove it. I knew Sir Robert Peel during my whole life almost—I admired him as a politician—I followed him as a leader—and I loved the man. He was a man, mind you, susceptible—proud, and justly proud, of the purity of his motives—jealous of his honour. I sat by him night by night on that bench when he was attacked by the foulest language, and accused of the meanest crimes. But Sir Robert Peel was a man of a generous nature—he was one who never rejoiced in the humiliation of an adversary; and he would have recollected this—that the humiliation, if humiliation it were, was a humiliation to be inflicted not only upon those who had assailed him, but also upon gentlemen for whose character he had the warmest regard. I don't confound hon. gentlemen opposite with those who calumniated Sir Robert Peel. I recollect even at the moment when party strife was embittered to the uttermost—when men's passions rose high—when great disappointment was felt at the course Sir Robert Peel had taken—even at that moment there were hon. gentlemen opposite who continued a general support to his government, and who never, when they opposed this very bill, either threw a doubt upon his motives or assailed his integrity. I say, then, that the memory of Sir Robert Peel requires no vindication—his memory is embalmed in the grateful recollection of the people of this country; and I say, if ever retribution is wanted—for it is not words that humiliate, but deeds—if a man wants to see humilia-

tion—which, God knows, is always a painful sight—he need but look there," and then, suiting the action to the word, Mr. Herbert pointed to the Treasury bench, and the Opposition seconded the application of the words by loud applause.

Not the least interesting feature in this long debate were the tributes of respect and esteem paid to the memory of Sir Robert Peel by members on both sides of the House. The distinguished repealer of the corn laws was now no longer an "apostate" or "traitor," but the purest of patriots and the most practical of statesmen. "As to Sir Robert Peel," said the Protectionist, Mr. Cayley, "he always gave him credit for the honesty of his convictions. He did not object, on the contrary he thought he was quite right, having changed his convictions to change his policy. There was only some difference between them as to the mode in which he carried out his change of opinion as regarded his party." Lord Granby declared that all men should now acknowledge that Sir Robert Peel "was not only patriotic and conscientious, but also farseeing and sagacious." Sir John Pakington said—"In connection with the question of change of views, there have been allusions this evening by different gentlemen, and among others by my noble friend the member for Leicestershire (Lord Granby), to the late Sir Robert Peel. My noble friend spoke in a frank and an honourable spirit on that subject. The members of government have been pointedly alluded to on that subject since; and therefore I cannot and will not shrink from saying that no single word of disrespect to Sir Robert Peel ever has escaped, or ever will escape, my lips. It was my misfortune in 1846 that I could not concur with Sir Robert Peel, and in opposing him on that occasion I made a great sacrifice of both party feeling and personal feeling. I opposed the right hon. gentleman then, and, with whatever degree of diffidence I did so, I never shrank from voting against him when my conscience would not allow

me to vote with him. But I agree with my noble friend, that a purer patriot never lived." Sir James Graham, alluding to Sir Robert Peel, thus delivered himself, "Amidst all his characteristics I should say the Christian temper and forgiveness of my right hon. friend was that which most distinguished him. I say also that he always considered what, under circumstances of public emergency, it was politic to do in reference to the good of the country, and the maintenance of the cause which he espoused." But the most eloquent of all these panegyrics was the tribute paid by Mr. Gladstone.

"I trust," the member for the University of Oxford said, "notwithstanding the bitter exasperation and extraordinary prolongation of the conflict now closing, that a similar spirit of moderation and forbearance still predominates in this House; and I dare tell the hon. member for the West Riding, that I feel no force at all in his appeal to me,* when he quotes the name of Sir Robert Peel, not because that name is not venerated and precious in my eyes, but because I conceive that in giving the vote which we are about to give in favour of the resolution of my noble friend, we are taking the course that he himself would have adopted. It is our honour and pride to be his followers; let us imitate him in that magnanimity which was one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the man. No doubt Sir Robert Peel when he severed the ties of five-and-thirty years, during which he was associated with the party opposite, felt the price that he was paying for the performance of his duty. It was no small matter in the advanced stage of a life like his to break up, and to break up for ever, its habits and its associations. He looked, perhaps, for his revenge; but for what revenge did he look? He did not seek to vindicate it by stinging speeches, or by

motions carried in his favour, or in favour of his policy, if they bore a sense of pain and degradation to the minds of honourable men. The vindication for which he looked was, I am confident, this:—He knew that the wisdom of his measures would secure their acceptance. He knew that those who had opposed them from erroneous opinions would acknowledge them after competent experience. He looked to see them established in the esteem and sound judgment of the country. He looked to see them governing by slow but sure degrees the policy of every nation of the civilized world. He thought that he would have his reward, first, in the substantial and enormous good that he was the instrument in the hands of Providence for effecting; and secondly, in the reputation that he believed would be his own appropriate reward.

And as to that aristocracy, whose prepossessions he might feel that he was then violently thwarting, he, with prophetic insight, anticipated the day when the very men who reviled him—if they were men, as he believed them, of honest judgments and intentions—that those very men, who had used opprobrious language, never so ill-deserved, would in the course of time see that he had never rendered them so great and so solid a service as when, with the whole power of his government, he proposed to parliament the repeal of the corn laws. His belief was, that their cause was a great and sacred cause—that the aristocracy of England was an element in its political and social system with which the welfare of the country was inseparably bound up, and to him, therefore, it was a noble object of ambition to redeem such a cause from association with a policy originally adopted in a state of imperfect knowledge and with erroneous views, but which, with the clear light of experience poured upon it, was each day assuming more and more in the view of the thinking portion of the community the character of what was sordid and what was false. He anticipated those bloodless, those painless rewards,

* Mr. Cobden had said, "How the friends of the late Sir Robert Peel can go into the lobby with the Protectionist party, and vote against the proposition that their own measure of 1846 was a wise, and a just, and a beneficial measure, passes my comprehension."—*November 26, 1852.*

which would be honourable and delightful to him, had it pleased God to spare him, which will be honourable and delightful to my hon. friend the member for Bury (Mr. F. Peel), and to those who are entitled to claim kindred with that great man; which are now delightful to us who had in former times the high privilege of combating by his side, and who are now as fondly as ever attached to his memory. Those were the vindications for which he looked, and, looking for those vindications, and seeing that we have now arrived at the point when we are celebrating the obsequies of that obnoxious policy, and when we are about to adopt by an overwhelming majority, in one sense or another, a declaration admitted to be perfectly unequivocal of the beneficial character and excellence of the system which he defended, oh, I say, in such a moment as this, if we still cherish a desire to trample upon those who fought manfully and have been defeated fairly, let us endeavour to put it away from ourselves, to rejoice in the great public good we have been enabled to attain, and to take courage from the attainment of that good for the performance of public duty in the future!"

After a keen debate of three nights, the House at length came to a division on the question, "that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question." There were 592 members in the House—256 voted in favour of Mr. Villiers' motion, 336 against it—majority, 80. A division then took place on Lord Palmerston's amendment, previously to which seventy-one members left the House, and the votes appeared as follows:—

For the amendment,	468
Against it,	53
<hr/>	
Majority in favour of the amendment, .	415

The following was the final form of the resolutions, as passed by the House:—

"That it is the opinion of this House that the improved condition of the country, and especially of the industrious classes, is mainly the result of recent legislation,

which has established the principle of unrestricted competition, has abolished taxes imposed for the purposes of Protection, and has thereby diminished the cost and increased the abundance of the principal articles of the food of the people.

"That it is the opinion of this House that this policy, firmly maintained and prudently extended, will, without inflicting injury on any important interest, best enable the industry of the country to bear its burdens, and will thereby most surely promote the welfare and contentment of the people.

"That this House will be ready to take into consideration any measures consistent with these principles, which, in pursuance of Her Majesty's gracious speech and recommendation, may be laid before it."

Such was the end of the memorable debate on free trade which ushered in the doom of Protection, and caused reciprocity to be a word of reproach. The speeches delivered on that occasion have a peculiar interest for us at the present day. After some thirty years' trial, we are beginning to think whether our position as the isolated teacher and practiser of the principles of free trade is causing us to bring forth the fruit we had anticipated. In spite of all the lore of the economists, we find that, save ourselves, every country is advocating more and more strenuously, as the century ages, the selfishness of Protection, and beating us in the race for wealth and commercial prosperity. On all sides—from the farmer, the manufacturer, the hop merchant, the wool merchant, the sugar refiner, the iron founder, the ship builder, and the rest—we listen to moans as to the impossibility of making headway against untaxed foreign competition and cheap foreign labour. Perhaps the day is not far distant when our government, mindful of our producing as well as of our consuming classes, may arrive at the conclusion expressed by Mr. Disraeli when opposing the then new commercial system:—"Reciprocity," he said, "is indeed a great principle—it is

at once cosmopolitan and national. But the system you are pursuing is one quite contrary:* you go on fighting hostile tariffs

* The speech recently delivered by the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords (July 7, 1881) on the sugar bounties, expresses the sentiments of numerous depressed interests at the present day. The Marquis of Salisbury, rising to present a petition from merchants, planters, and others connected with the island of Barbadoes, said, "He had taken the less usual course of giving notice in order that he might preface the presenting of the petition with a few remarks, not only because it was a petition from a distant colony and therefore specially deserving of consideration and attention, but because it expressed the feelings of a portion of Her Majesty's subjects who were complaining, like many others at the present moment, that their interests were adversely affected and the just reward of their industry withdrawn by the fiscal action of foreign powers. The growth of that feeling in this country must be familiar to their lordships, and it was not necessary that he should dwell upon the remarkable change of opinion which had taken place in many centres of industry, or upon the fact that proposals were now being heard which ten or twenty years ago would have been thought impossible. He did not propose to enter upon that portion of the commercial discontent of the present day which dealt with the question of adverse fiscal duties, and which claimed retaliatory duties as a protection. That was a subject of exceeding difficulty, and he would be sorry to say anything that might be interpreted to be at variance with those principles of commercial policy which this country had deliberately adopted. The particular case which the planters and merchants of Barbadoes wished to bring before their lordships and before the English public did not deal with that class of proposals commonly known under the name of reciprocity. The fiscal measures of foreign governments gave advantages to their own subjects in two ways. They imposed duties of protection which excluded our goods from their markets. In that way they gave a bounty to their own traders at the expense of their own consumers. The case which he had to bring before the House did not belong to that class. It was a case of foreign governments by direct bounties drawn from the resources of the taxpayer cheapening the products of their own manufacturers and so driving the manufacturers of other countries, and especially of this empire, out of the market. The consumption of sugar had, as was known, grown enormously during the last ten years, owing to the increase of population and wealth and the abolition of duty in this country, but the import from the West Indian planters had been almost absolutely stationary, while the advantage of the state subsidy was shown by the fact that within the last few years the export of beetroot sugar had advanced from 600,000 tons to more than 1,500,000 tons. The question had engaged the consideration of successive governments, and it was thought that the best course would be to allow the matter to be referred to a committee of the House of Commons, and that committee made an able and exhaustive report last session. The prayer of the petition and the considerations which he should urge on the government did not go beyond the proposals of the committee. He only asked that due attention should be given to those proposals, and that they should not be entirely neglected. Five or six years ago there was a very flourishing sugar refining industry in this country. The competition of the French refiner, supported by the bounty out of the French taxes, had driven the English refiner out of the French market, and all the establishments which existed five or six years ago had now been closed, and the trade was absolutely destroyed. *Let him not be told that we were bound by the principles of free trade to look on coldly and calmly and see the destruction of British industries accomplished.* If they laid down that doctrine, nothing would induce them to interfere when a

with free imports, and the consequence is that you are following a course most injurious to the commerce of the country."

foreign government was destroying British industry. They might be quite sure that those undertakings which had hitherto been so successful would be imitated in other industries, and industry after industry would be destroyed by the co-operation of foreign governments with foreign manufacturers, against which the British manufacturer was absolutely powerless. If it really was the case that considerable benefit to the consumer resulted from this policy there would, no doubt, be a very material consolation. But it was always open to a foreign government to enter into partnership with its own manufacturers to destroy British industry altogether, and when that was done there was no necessity that the bounty should be continued. Already the French government had made a further step along this path—already a bounty was given on ships. He did not know what effect this step was likely to have on the British industry of shipbuilding, but it was looked upon with considerable alarm, and he regarded it as a danger against which our own manufacturers and government would have to guard. One of the great difficulties in dealing with this question, as was pointed out by the Earl of Beaconsfield, was the network of favoured-nation clauses which now existed, and which would hinder us from taking any isolated action; but the committee to which he had referred were of opinion that the government should institute careful inquiry, and that in the event of its being found impossible to arrive at an international agreement for the suppression of bounties when the existing treaties expired, the opportunity should be taken by Her Majesty's government of making such alterations as would leave them at liberty to deal with the question. With reference to the negotiations which were now going on with France, he thought that Her Majesty's government were bound to see that some arrangements were made, if they did enter into a treaty, for redressing the great injury under which a once flourishing British industry and a considerable number of workmen were now suffering. If they agreed with the French government in this matter, he had no doubt that Austria would be disposed to come to terms. The matter was one for negotiation, and if advocated by England and France combined there would be a greater chance of success than if it were urged by England alone. At all events, he earnestly trusted that Her Majesty's government would not simply let the matter pass by. There was a cry arising for remedies which it might puzzle and perplex statesmen to apply. He knew that a great authority, the chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster—the same authority who some thirty years ago was so fond of telling them that all nations would become free traders—now said that the demand for any action of a reciprocal or retaliatory character was a sign of lunacy.* He certainly had no wish that any action should be adopted which was inconsistent with the sound doctrines of free trade, but he should hesitate to apply the name of lunatic to all who were of the opposite opinion, because he feared that by so doing he would be forced to the conclusion that there were a larger number of lunatics in the world than sane people. He did not think that calling people lunatics would stop the cry which had arisen. *If the government took no pains to remove such grievances as he had indicated, he feared that, before long, they would be confronted by a political force with which they would find it difficult to deal.*"

* This is what Mr. Bright said (Nov. 23, 1852) in his speech in favour of the motion of Mr. Villiers—"Don't you think that if this country, by supporting the motion of my hon. friend, shows that the advantages of free trade are universally appreciated, it may bring other nations round to the doctrine, and so much more will the free-trade policy be advantageous. Let us then put upon the books a resolution that nobody can mistake, and it will have a good effect, not only throughout the United Kingdom, but in every civilized nation in which the subject is under discussion."

CHAPTER X.

THE BUDGET.

SINCE the principle of unrestricted competition had now, by the verdict of the House of Commons, been definitely accepted as the basis of the future commercial policy of the country, the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer was eagerly awaited by all parties. Mr. Disraeli did not allow the nation to remain long in suspense. Within a week of the debate upon the motion of Mr. Villiers, the budget was introduced (December 3, 1852), to a house crowded in every part. The first financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer had been a merely provisional affair; the second, however, it was said, was to be a comprehensive and original undertaking. The House listened to the orator with that curiosity and readiness of appreciation which the audience in a theatre display towards a new and original play, written by one who has hitherto only exhibited marked talent in adaptations.

Mr. Disraeli began by requesting the House to consider the financial statement he put before it as a whole; and he therefore trusted that, in justice to himself, members, on whichever side they sat, would not, until the views of the government were fairly placed before them, be carried away by any feeling of the moment, too precipitately to decide on the motives and principles of the policy which it was now his duty to propound. Since the system of unrestricted competition had been entirely and finally adopted by the country, he would first treat of the claims of those who considered that they had received peculiar injury from what had been familiarly described as "recent legislation." Those suffering interests had within the last few years been fre-

quently before the House. They were the shipping interest, the sugar-producing interest, and the agricultural interest; and it now became a most important question how the grievances they complained of could be redressed. He would deal with each of these interests separately, and he sincerely hoped that parliament would approach the discussion in a generous spirit. He could conceive no state of society more to be deprecated than one in which there were minorities, but powerful minorities, who believed that they were subjected to injustice in consequence of changes in the law, contributing to otherwise universal welfare.

First let them consider the state of the shipping interest. It was not disputed that that interest, owing to the repeal of the navigation laws, was at that moment subject to burdens to which it ought not to be liable, and which, even in the words of Lord John Russell, "impeded its prosperity." The grievances complained of by that body could thus be classed. There were the grievances as to vexatious taxation, under the head of light dues and passing tolls; the grievances as to the rules regulating the pilotage of the country; the Admiralty grievances under which an individual attached to the mercantile marine was enlisted in the royal navy, and the grievances relating to salvage and anchorage. The history of these complaints was a curious chapter in English social life. For instance, vessels had not only to pay dues for the advantage of lighthouses, but also for private lights; they were taxed to maintain the charities of a corporation; and they had to pay "passing tolls" to harbours into which they never entered.

Then there were the anomalies of pilotage. A Thames pilot could steer a ship to a Cinque port, but he could not steer it back; another pilot connected with another corporation performed the duty of returning. Thus the shipping interest having to employ two men to execute a duty which one man could discharge, the expense was proportionately increased, and the burden in many cases was found to be excessive. The license allowed to the merchant sailor was also curious. When a merchant ship found herself on a foreign station, it frequently happened that one of the crew without any ceremony quitted his captain without any notice, and often without any cause, and immediately enlisted in a ship belonging to the royal navy that happened to be on that station. Such right and privilege acted very injuriously upon the discipline and general conduct of the merchant shipping. The merchant sailor, in spite of his engagement with his captain, simply hoisted his red shirt, enlisted in the royal vessel that might be in the offing, and at once demanded his wages. Thus the captain of the merchantman not only lost one of his crew, but was called upon immediately to pay wages which otherwise would not have been due until the ship arrived in port.

Again, in the matters of anchorage and salvage, the royal navy pressed hardly upon the mercantile marine; a merchant vessel could be disturbed in her anchorage by the superior claim of a ship belonging to Her Majesty's navy; and as to the operation of the present system under which salvage was conducted, the mercantile marine was also very adversely affected by it. These grievances the government were prepared to redress. "We propose," said Mr. Disraeli, "to reduce the taxation which is paid by the shipping interest under the claim of supporting the lighthouses of the country—namely, the interest of debt which has been incurred, the contribution to charities and passing tolls to harbours which ships never enter. We propose to termi-

nate these three great sources of unjust taxation; and we believe we shall be able to effect this object by the annual sum of £100,000. The shipping interest will then have to pay only for the light-houses which benefit them—which guide their ships and save their lives; and I am sure they will no more complain of a tax levied upon them for such objects and upon such principles, than any other class of the community will complain of the peculiar taxes to which they may be subject, but for which they gain in return peculiar advantages. We propose, in the second place, to submit to the consideration of a committee of the House of Commons the whole question of pilotage, in order that we may arrive at a result which I am sure will be impartial and satisfactory, as well as final. We propose that the three Admiralty grievances of which the shipping interest complain—anchorage, salvage, and enlistment—shall be entirely terminated, or, at least, subject to regulations which will deprive them of the injustice and injury which are so justly complained of."

The claims of the sugar-producing colonies next attracted his attention. "We must forget," Mr. Disraeli cautioned the House, "that sugar has been the battlefield of parties. We must form an opinion upon the condition of those colonies from the stern naked facts which may be placed before us, and not with any recollection of the past. We may deplore the legislation that is past; we may be of opinion, gentlemen on both sides, that the conduct of this country towards the sugar-producing colonies has been inconsistent and incoherent; that great unnecessary damage and devastation have been occasioned; that, as an interest, they have been treated in a wanton and indefensible manner: but what we have to decide to-night is, what in the present state of affairs we can justly do for them." He then laid before the committee the claims of the sugar-producing colonies for relief from England, compiled from a memorial presented by the West India

body. These claims, briefly summed up, were:—First, the arrest of the descent of the duties on foreign sugar; secondly, the reduction of the duty upon British plantation sugar; thirdly, a guarantee of additional loans for emigration and improvement; fourthly, the permission to refine bonded sugar; fifthly, the permission to use molasses in British breweries; and sixthly, the equalization of the duties on rum and British spirits. With regard to the first two demands, he proved from returns in his hands, that there was no valid claim for a differential duty, or for a diminution of the colonial duty. He found that the consumption of colonial sugar had greatly increased, and that foreign sugar had decreased. Therefore, clearly on the first two points the colonial sugar planters had no ground for complaint; their trade had extended, and they were not interfered with by foreign competition.

"I may be called traitor," said Mr. Disraeli, amid the cheers and laughter of his audience, "I may be called renegade; but I want to know whether there is any gentleman in this house, wherever he may sit, who would recommend a differential duty to prop up a prostrate industry which is actually commanding the metropolitan market, under the circumstances which I have placed before parliament? It is unnecessary to enter into any argument on the point. No person could think of proposing an increase of differential duties except for the attainment of a definite object. If that object be to give the command of the home market to our colonies, it is already attained." Then as to the request for additional loans to defray the expense of emigration and improvement, Mr. Disraeli stated that measures had been taken to send Chinese emigrants to the West Indies for labour; and as for the want of an additional loan, why, the sum of £500,000 already provided for the encouragement of emigration to their sugar-producing colonies had not yet been exhausted! He would not enter at present into the claims as to

the use of molasses in breweries, and the reduction of the duty on rum; but as to the petition of the West India body to refine their sugar in bond, the government would grant that request. There was less saccharine matter in colonial sugar than in foreign sugar, practically enhancing the duty on colonial sugar. The colonists asked to refine their sugar in bond for home consumption—that was, that the government should take the duty on the refined produce, and not upon the coarse or raw sugar. "Here," exclaimed the chancellor of the exchequer, "we have an opportunity of conceding to them a great boon, which is quite consistent with the principle of unrestricted competition. I announce on the part of the government, that we are prepared to concede this boon; we think it ought to be conceded, and we believe it will afford great relief, and also give a fresh impulse to the manufacture of colonial sugar."

He now came to that long-agitated question, the condition of the agricultural interest. That interest was of opinion that it suffered unduly from the burden of taxation, and he would now look into the subject for the information of the House. Local taxation resolved itself into three principal rates—the highway rate, the county rate, the poor rate—rates which the agricultural party declared pressed very severely upon them. As to the highway rate, six bills had already been brought into parliament with the view of establishing a better administration of that tax, and now a seventh bill was being prepared, which the government hoped would win the confidence of the House and the country, and have a beneficial effect, both administratively and financially, on the districts affected by the highway rate. With respect to the county rate, the tax was a slight one; any interference with it would lead to much disturbance in the general taxation of the country, and, therefore, he frankly avowed that he was not prepared to make any change, in that por-

tion at least, of their local taxation. He next had to consider that great rate, called the poor rate. He had always held, and still held, that the absolute incidence of all local taxation was perfectly indefensible in point of principle, therefore he had not altered his views upon this subject. It was, however, his duty to remember that a very great change had taken place in the burden of the poor rate; between the years 1848 and 1851 it had diminished nearly twenty-five per cent. That decrease materially influenced him in the course he was about to take. The amount expended for the relief and maintenance of the poor in 1851, instead of being over £6,000,000, as had been calculated, was really under £5,000,000.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Disraeli, commenting upon the vociferous applause with which this statement had been received by the Opposition, "I am afraid that is really not a cheer on account of the diminution of pauperism. I am afraid it is a cheer for recent legislation. Now I don't want to disturb 'recent legislation,' but your cheer is a very illogical one, and I must show you—what I should not otherwise have done, because I don't want to raise any controversy on the subject—that recent legislation may not have had anything to do with this result. Now you," said he, addressing the Opposition, "think 'recent legislation' is the cause of the poor rates in 1851 having been under £5,000,000, and upon that you cheered; but then it so happens that in 1846, before 'recent legislation' took place, the rates were rather less."

Mr. Bright—"With the same price of corn?"

"I think," continued Mr. Disraeli, "though I don't want to do it, I could produce some returns of the prices of corn which would show that diminished poor rates may co-exist with high prices of corn—one return, for instance, which, when I quoted it, the late Sir Robert Peel said ought never to have been printed; but there are greater

subjects for us to consider than the triumph of obsolete opinions [this remark made in Mr. Disraeli's best manner caused immense laughter amid the Opposition]. Yes, I look upon one-sided free trade as an obsolete opinion, just as you look upon Protection—obsolete because they are lost in the great principle of the day, that of unrestricted competition." Therefore, concluded Mr. Disraeli upon this subject, believing that the country was in a most prosperous state and that pauperism was on the decline, and taking also into consideration the measures he was about to introduce, he was not "prepared to recommend any change in the present system of raising the local taxation of the country."

Having discussed the position of these three interests—the shipping, the colonial, and agricultural—he now approached the more important topic of viewing the taxation of the country under the new circumstances in which all parties and conditions of men had agreed they were to be placed. "So long," he said, "as there were two great parties in this country who questioned the principle upon which our commercial code ought to be established, it was impossible to obtain any general adhesion to the principle upon which our financial policy ought to be constructed. So long as a man thought that his industry ought to be protected, he was prepared to endure a heavy burden of taxation artificially distributed. So long as a man thought that his industry should be free from all restriction, of course he demurred against the system which imposed restriction upon the financial arrangements of the country and raised the prices of the articles which he consumed. It is obvious, generally speaking, that the doctrine of unrestricted competition is not consistent with restricted industry—in a word, if you decree that the community are to receive low prices for their produce, your policy ought to be one which will put an end, as soon as possible, to high taxes. Well, sir, after the general election, and after the solemn verdict of the country, we

had to ask ourselves what were the measures which it was best to recommend to parliament—now that this principle was formally and definitely established, what were the measures most consistent with that principle, and which would enable the community to encounter that competition which it must now in every form, and in every sense, be prepared to meet?

"Well, sir, when we took that subject into consideration, giving it the utmost thought we could command, it appeared to us that we must arrive inevitably at this result—that we should best enable the people to engage in that competition to which they are now for ever destined, by cheapening as much as possible that which sustains their lives. We look, therefore, to articles that are of prime necessity; and if we find that those articles of prime necessity are subjected to some of the heaviest taxes in our tariff, then we say that these are arrangements inconsistent with the new system established and the new principle of which we have approved. It is the boast of hon. gentlemen opposite, that they have given cheap bread to the community; but the principles upon which you have given cheap bread to the community are principles which ought to make you cheapen the sustenance of the community in every form. The House, therefore, will not be astonished that Her Majesty's government are prepared to recommend parliament to deal with the malt tax. Here is a prime necessity of life subject to a very heavy tax, and a very high tax levied under circumstances which greatly restrict industry." He recommended that the duty—which produced more than five millions—should be diminished one half; and that there should be paid an uniform duty of 1s. 3½*d.* and 5 per cent. per bushel upon barley, bere, and bigg; abolishing the differential duty against the two latter, and also the drawback upon spirits made from corn in Scotland. He proposed that the alteration should take effect on the 10th of October next; a drawback being allowed to holders. At the

same time half the duty on hops would be remitted.

He turned now to another branch of the subject. He was about to deal with an article as popular with the people as malt, as much a necessary of life, and subjected to a much heavier tax. He alluded to the tea duties. "I hardly know," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "anything more diverting than to open Pepys' 'Diary,' where we see it stated, 'Took a cup of the new China drink—very pleasant;' and to remember that not two centuries have passed, and the exotic novelty which pleased one evening that fantastic gentleman is now the principal solace in every cottage in the kingdom." It had been said that, because tea was an article of limited production, therefore it was impossible that there could be any reduction in the price. He denied the statement. When he looked to the gradual increase in the importation of tea into this country—from 500,000 lbs. in the days of Mr. Pepys to over 70,000,000 lbs. a year at the present day, and to the vast resources of China so far as tea trees were concerned—he felt sure that there would never be any difficulty in the future in supplying England with tea. He proposed to reduce the present duty of 2*s.* 2½*d.* per pound to 1*s.* per pound; but that the reduction should take place during the term of six years, beginning with a reduction of 4½*d.* per pound the first year, and diminishing it to 2*d.* per pound each year, until the duty reached 1*s.* It was necessary to make the change gradual, since the increased supply would be gradual, as it took three or four years to make a tea tree. "I believe," said Mr. Disraeli, "that if you adopt that system you will very little injure the revenue; that you will gradually enable the people of this country to have a supply at a very reasonable rate of a very favourite beverage; and that you will do more than that—that you will give a great stimulus to the commerce, the shipping, and the manufactures of this country. For my own part I do not know any measure more

calculated to give a great stimulus to the commerce and shipping of the country than a measure dealing largely and extensively with the tea duties."

These reductions were of course recommended on the principle that the revenue of the country mainly depended upon the consuming power of the people. Of late alarmists had rumoured about, with considerable vehemence, that the consuming power of the people was rapidly diminishing. As chancellor of the exchequer it had become his duty to investigate that report. He met with no evidence to justify such a fear. It was true that emigration was actively going on; yet while 100,000 persons a year were quitting the country, the birth-rate proved that 200,000 were coming into it. Nor did he consider that emigration tended to diminish the consuming power. "Every emigrant from England," said Mr. Disraeli, "generally becomes an English colonist, and an English colonist becomes an English customer, and our markets are stimulated, our people are employed, and their wages are improved by the very circumstance which some regard as tending to our decay and desolation." The consuming power of a people did not depend upon their numbers, but upon their condition. It had also been apprehended that the rate of wages had increased so rapidly as to almost destroy the rate of profit. But they must also remember that, if wages had risen, the rate of interest was low, and the increase of gold had established credit in a manner which no political economist had ever imagined. He believed that if they only acted with tolerable prudence, with such advantages as they derived from a low rate of interest arising from natural causes, the country had before it an opportunity of material progress such as never occurred before to the vision of any statesman.

From the proposed remission of duty upon malt, hops, and tea, Mr. Disraeli calculated that there would be a loss to the revenue of between £3,000,000 and

£4,000,000. In addition to that loss the income tax, which yielded more than £5,000,000, was about to expire. It would become the duty of the House to consider what they would do with the income and property tax. His own views, which he had fully expressed upon a former occasion, he still maintained. He considered that direct taxation should be as general as indirect taxation, and that a measure of direct taxation founded upon a large scheme of exemption ought not to be tolerated. He proposed to continue the income tax, and to extend it to Ireland, but to acknowledge a difference between permanent and precarious incomes. Ireland had been treated as an exceptional case. Sir Robert Peel had exempted Ireland from the income tax on the ground that she contributed an equivalent in the form of other taxes—since repealed. It was impossible to be insensible of what Ireland had gone through; but she was not now without a ray of hope. Her poor-law expenditure had diminished from £1,320,000 in 1850 to £855,000 in 1852. Still he did not think it wise to treat the landed proprietors of Ireland with harshness, and say, "You shall pay your quota;" he did not think it expedient to throw any obstacle in the way of Ireland's regeneration: but he thought it his duty to extend the income tax to funded property and salaries in Ireland. There was another principle with regard to that tax to which ministers were prepared to assent, namely, the distinction between permanent and precarious incomes. It was not their intention to propose any increase in any of the schedules. They recommended that on all industrial incomes the point of exemption should be limited to £100 a year, and on incomes arising from property to £50 a year. They took the estimate of the profits of farmers not at one-half the rent, as heretofore, but at one-third; and the consequence would be, that with the reduction of duty the farmers would pay exactly one-half of what they paid under

the present rate. The total amount, including the modest sum of £60,000 for Ireland, he calculated at £5,421,000.

Mr. Disraeli next referred to the naval estimates, and in the remarks he made on this occasion we see how little sympathy he had with those niggardly economists and short-sighted manufacturers who objected to every farthing spent upon the defences of the country. He proposed to increase the naval estimates, not, however, with any reference to the question of peace or war. "It matters not," he said, "what may be the original cause; it matters not what dynasty may be upon the throne upon the other side of the channel; it does not turn upon what may have been said or done elsewhere—that the attention of the nation has been drawn to the state of the national defences. That attention was drawn originally by the highest military authority of the land. The effect of being so long in peace was brought to the consideration of the most industrious people in the world; it was drawn to their consideration while all the tendencies of the age seemed to secure tranquillity and happy repose. I say, that there was no panic or precipitation, but, on the contrary, a prejudice against what the people of this country supposed to be disturbing the dreams of repose and prosperity in which they indulged. But sooner or later the idea seized the public mind. It was taken more and more into consideration; and totally irrespective of external circumstances, the nation arrived at the conclusion that this country was not in that state of defence that is necessary and desirable. They arrived at the conviction that it was of primary importance that the shores of this country should be protected, and that its defences should be complete. If I were asked on the part of Her Majesty's government—in no other way would I presume to give an opinion—what I thought was the tendency of the present age and what the general course which present circumstances indicated, I should say, without

reserve and speaking from the bottom of my heart and in all sincerity, that I believe the predominant feeling of the present day is peace. But I believe the measures Her Majesty's government intend to recommend to parliament will tend to the preservation of peace.

"On considering the subject after the general election, we felt it to be our duty to lose no time in recommending the necessary measures. If it be a fact—and I assume that it is a fact—that this country is not properly defended, and that it wants to be properly defended; let due preparations, we say, be made for its defence. On considering the question we thought the best thing was to do it completely. We thought the best thing to do would be to put the navy of this country in the position in which we believe all Englishmen wish to see it; and the plans we have matured, and which, if the House will support our proposition, will be carried into complete effect, will be plans which will settle this question of our national defences for ever; that is to say, you will have all your arsenals and strong points in the kingdom defended, and you will have a real channel fleet, which can assemble from its different rendezvous at the moment necessary, and which is the proper garrison and protection of the country. It would have been more convenient for Her Majesty's government to defer the question—as they would have done if they had not felt it to be their paramount duty to bring it at once before the House of Commons. They were busied with measures the tendency of which, they believe, will be in due time to reduce the expenditure and the establishment of the country. But they felt it was totally impossible to mix up a question of this importance, and from its nature of this urgency, with questions of administrative reform. They felt that if the country were not properly defended, and if the people wished it to be properly defended, the question was one which ought at once to be completely and definitely settled. Sir,

we have taken those steps which we believe will insure the complete defence of this country. It will be necessary for me to ask for a supplementary estimate, so far as this year is concerned. I hope there will not be any difficulty raised on the part of the House. The state of the finances of the country as I shall show in a few minutes, will perfectly authorize me in asking a supplementary grant for the current year, to be supplied from the ways and means; and next year we shall ask your approval of an estimate which will increase our general estimate about £600,000."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to give an account of the actual state of the finances, in order to show what would be the probable surplus at the end of the current financial year. After striking a balance between loss and profit, he said that he thought their surplus for the current year, taking the most prudent and the coldest calculation, would, instead of being £460,000, as estimated when he made his financial statement, be something between £1,300,000 or £1,400,000.

In these days, when retrenchment is so warmly advocated by a certain school in the House of Commons, and when commissions are being frequently organized to inquire into the condition of the permanent civil service of the country, Mr. Disraeli's observations upon administrative reform may be read with profit:—

"Sir, I mentioned that it was the hope and intention of Her Majesty's government, if they were permitted to follow the course they had chalked out for themselves, ultimately, but not precipitately, to effect no inconsiderable reduction in the expenditure of the country. This, I think, is a subject which has hardly yet been fairly dealt with. Hitherto we have considered that retrenchment, and not efficiency, was the parent of economy. A government has reduced estimates from the necessity of the moment, and there has been an apparent reduction in expenditure; but it has always been followed by a collapse, and generally the

unfortunate office of supplying the deficiency of an administration has fallen to their successors. One administration cuts down, another is obliged to increase; and so long as it is made a mere question of pounds, shillings, and pence, I am certain that no permanent and substantial reduction in the expenditure of the country can be obtained. I think it is the duty of an administration to look to the efficiency of the establishments of the country, and not to the rate at which they may be maintained. If you only make your establishments efficient, you will find almost, as a natural consequence, that you will save money; and, therefore, I take it to be efficiency, and not retrenchment, which is the true parent of economy.

"To effect reductions in the establishments of this country is about the most ungracious task in which an administration can embark. There is nothing easier in opposition than to call for retrenchment; there is nothing more difficult in administration than to comply with that demand. So long as you have your existing establishments founded on the same principles, and carried on in the same spirit, you will arrive at the same result. I do not mean to make any observation which shall seem at all to cast censure on those by whom the permanent civil service of this country is carried on, and to whom those engaged in the administration of affairs have been so much indebted; on the contrary, the other night I had occasion to offer my tribute to their invaluable services.* What they do they do in the best manner, but they are not responsible for the establishments of the country. It is our opinion that the system of administration is not as advanced as other great operations are in this country. Whether we look to our commerce, whether we look

* "I am the last man to refrain from doing justice to the permanent civil servants of this country. Their devotion to the public service is, I think, one of the most beautiful features of our social system. They have not public fame, but they have the appreciation of those whom they support and assist."—*House of Commons Free-trade debate, Mr. Disraeli, Nov. 23, 1852.*

to the other occupations of man, these have undergone more change with reference to the circumstances of the age, than the establishments by which the administration of the country is conducted. How are we to deal with these immense difficulties? If you attempt reform, you have to meet the two most formidable obstacles in the world—prejudice and skill. The person who presides over a great department does not like your interfering, and he has more knowledge than you have. What can be more difficult than to effect a reform under such circumstances? I have a great respect for the House of Commons, to which I owe everything; and there is no one who more highly esteems the labours of the committees than I do. If I wanted a committee on the state of India, for example, I do not know that I could find anywhere a body of men who could conduct such an investigation in a manner so satisfactory. You bring a large body of men round the table—skilled statesmen, eminently qualified for investigating political and financial subjects. You bring to bear on public questions the knowledge and experience of those best qualified to arrive at just conclusions, and of men of the world. But if the House of Commons, by means of a committee, were to examine into a great public department, you would not arrive at a similar satisfactory conclusion, as if the same men were investigating the affairs of India, or the operation of the Factory Act, or any subject of general interest, on which the information, intelligence, and temper of men of the world may be brought to bear. You have too many men, you have men of different political opinions; and the results have been always, that the inquiry has been fruitless. You have had committees of inquiry with respect to the army, navy, and ordnance. What have you done? Nothing. But I say this, if you want administrative reform, why not apply to your great offices the same principles as those which you apply to your revenue departments? Issue commissions, and make the government

responsible for the information they acquire, and make them act upon it. I assure the House that the government are sincere in their attempts to effect administrative reform. There is a question of great importance with reference to these reforms which has long been recommended to the attention of the House of Commons—that is, the bringing of the whole revenue of the country under the control of parliament. Well, we are prepared to recommend such a course; and when these financial measures are passed, I will take an opportunity of bringing the subject of administrative reform before the House, and of explaining the measures which Her Majesty's government are prepared to propose."

Mr. Disraeli now proceeded to explain to the House the ways and means by which he proposed to carry out the policy contemplated by the government. He intended to terminate the operations of the public works loan fund commission, and to carry the repayments of the advances to the revenue as part of the ways and means. He estimated the loss on malt for the year 1853-54 at £1,000,000; the loss on tea at £400,000; the extra estimates would be £600,000; and the light dues £100,000—thus making a total of £2,100,000. "And now," he said, "for the ways and means. First, as to the surplus revenue for the year 1853-54. I have shown to the House that we might take our surplus for this year probably at £1,300,000. I hope I shall never have to move another vote for the Caffre war. That came into our budget last year to the amount of £460,000. I think, however, it would be imprudent to take credit for the whole of that £460,000 in our future calculations, although our recent accounts from that quarter are of an extremely favourable character, and although, as far as the financial question is concerned in reference to the commissariat, I am very sanguine on the subject. Still it is not at all impossible that we may have to propose a financial vote for extras on account of

the Caffre war; I should therefore say we ought to take off £200,000 on account of that charge. I take, therefore, the surplus for the year 1853-54 at about £1,600,000; I take the payments, if the House accedes to my proposition with regard to the public works fund being paid into the public treasury, at £400,000; that together will make about £2,000,000."

It then became his duty to propose to the House the means by which they were to increase the revenue of the country. He would not propose any addition to the customs duties—the repeal of those duties was a part of the system which they had recently adopted, and which he would not disturb; nor would he propose any measure of indirect taxation. He was going to ask the House to consider the principles on which the existing house tax was constructed. Deprecating the hostility which had in former times been exhibited to that tax by the inhabitants of the metropolis, he proceeded to show that there had been reasons for the discontent formerly excited against the impost which now no longer existed.

"Remember," he said, "the inhabitants of the metropolis were subjected then to an enormous system of direct and indirect taxation. They were subject to direct taxation connected with their houses, to the extent of double the amount of the house tax—namely, the window tax; and, in addition to all this, they were subject to that which they have subsequently told us was infinitely more grievous, infinitely more vexatious, and infinitely more injurious than all taxes—namely, the corn laws. Now, just let me remind the House of the real state of affairs as regards the house tax. Since that time—viz., in 1834—the duty on houses was repealed. It amounted, as a revenue, to £1,198,000. Since that time the duty on windows has been repealed, amounting to £1,950,000, making together £3,148,000; and since that time the duty on glass has been repealed, amounting to £800,000, £400,000

of which, according to the official return, was paid by houses for windows of crown glass. Since then, the duty on bricks, amounting to £465,000, and the duty on timber, amounting to more than £1,500,000, have been taken off; and certainly I may say that one-fourth of the duty on timber was contributed by houses. Besides all this, nearly £15,000,000 of indirect taxation have been taken off, and besides all this, too, the corn laws have been repealed, which so many believed to have been a more grievous kind of taxation than all the other indirect taxation from which they had been relieved. Well, then, I need not say anything, at least to-night, with respect to the justice of the house tax. The greatest writers are agreed that no tax is more free from objection than the house tax. I need not say to-night to my predecessor (Sir Charles Wood), who is exhausted as well as myself—I need not say anything to him in favour of a house tax, for he has introduced one himself. But what I would venture to say is this, that I cannot believe that when I make a proposition which is only to reconstruct on juster principles—principles which have always been eulogised in this House—an imperfect law, as it at present exists, and that when I ask to be permitted to do that in order to carry measures which will advance the interests of the country, and animate in the most conspicuous manner all the great branches of industry in this country, I cannot think that I shall hear in the year 1854 those objections to a house tax which were heard in 1834. The house tax is a direct tax, and yet it is accompanied with exceptions which are quite indefensible. Who can justify a house tax of which the operation is limited to houses of £20 value?" He proposed, therefore, that the basis of the tax should be extended to houses rated at not less than £10 a year. He would also increase the rate of the assessment. His proposal was that private houses should be rated at 1s. 6d. and shops at 1s. in the pound;

the whole produce from which would be £1,723,000.

Having made that statement, Mr. Disraeli completed his estimate for 1853-54, which he had been obliged to interrupt for the purpose of introducing these details. He calculated the ways and means at £3,510,000, which would have to meet an expenditure of £3,087,000—thus leaving a balance of something less than £500,000; and that, he thought, represented a not unfavourable condition of finance.

"I have now endeavoured to place before the committee those measures of financial and administrative reform which the government are prepared at once to bring forward. The hon. member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) seemed surprised that no provision was announced with regard to the stamps on marine insurance and charter-parties. I would point out to my hon. friend that this is one of those financial matters which could not be considered as coming within the scope of this preliminary statement. The government has contented itself, on this occasion, with propounding those measures which it is prepared, by the sanction of the House, to bring into immediate operation. We have studiously abstained from offering any opinion on any branch of the system of taxation on which we are not prepared immediately to act. The measures which we have thus announced are essentially practical measures. If the House sanctions them, they will, in our opinion, lay down certain principles of finance which will lead to results highly beneficial to the people of this country, and be the foundation of other measures, which, we believe, will prove still more beneficial. It does not become us, according to our sense of duty, to offer anything to the House which is not of a practical nature, or to make any proposition which we are not prepared, with the sanction of the House, to carry immediately into effect. At the same time, we have not neglected carefully to examine the question of the stamp duties and the probate duties, and

we think it not impossible to bring forward, on the right occasion, a duty on succession that will reconcile contending interests, and will terminate the system of injustice now so much complained of. At present, however, we are not prepared with a measure of that kind, and we consider it, as I have said, altogether injudicious to propound any project to the House which we are not ready at once to act upon. I admit that what I have now proposed is only a first step, but I trust the committee will admit it to be a step in the right direction. We have met this great question in a large and comprehensive spirit, fully prepared, if the House will support us, to carry out the policy which I have to-night, most inadequately, I am aware, indicated to the committee—a policy which, we believe, will be for the welfare of the country, because it is a policy founded on sound principles of finance, and because it has no other object than to govern the country in the manner that shall most conduce to the happiness of the greatest number."

The speech occupied five hours in delivery, and numerous of its passages were loudly cheered. Mr. Disraeli's powers of lucid exposition, his grasp of the subject, and the practical character of the suggestions he raised, had now fully convinced the House that the chancellor of the exchequer was not only a wit, a genius, and an orator, but a sound business man. "It was well done," wrote Macaulay, "both as to manner and language. The statement was lucid, though much too long. I could have said the whole as clearly, or more clearly, in two hours; and Disraeli was up five. The plan was nothing but taking money out of the pockets of people in towns and putting it into the pockets of growers of malt. I greatly doubt whether he will be able to carry it, but he has raised his reputation for practical ability." "Without committing ourselves," commented the *Times* (December 4, 1852), "at once to every item in the long and weighty

catalogue of financial reforms now before us, we must say that the chancellor of the exchequer not only takes advantage of his position with the dexterity of a master, but has really succeeded in showing that a new position, new resources, and new capabilities are before us. He has done much to remove that almost oppressive feeling which for the last two or three years has been creeping over the energies of the country, that we had pretty well got to the end of our tether, and, like the Arctic discoverers, had carried our political inquiries to the last limits of utility and discretion."

At first the details of the budget, before reflection had developed into criticism, were cordially approved of. The recognition of the principle that a distinction existed for fiscal purposes between income derived from transitory sources and income which issued from real property was regarded as just and sound. The suggestion to place the customs and excise establishments under the control of parliament was looked upon as wise and beneficial. The reduction of the taxes on malt, hops, and tea, appeared a boon for which thousands would be grateful. The house duty, one of the fairest and least injurious of taxes, did not seem when proposed to excite any grave opposition. Mr. Disraeli sat down amid loud cheers, and from the temper of the House he was justified in entertaining the hope that his measures would be carried without creating greater hostility than usually attends upon the details of a budget. Shortly afterwards, however, sober second-thoughts began to make their influence felt upon the minds of members. Objections arose, and once set on foot they swelled in volume and force. The tea duties, it was urged, instead of being reduced gradually, should be reduced at once. The malt tax should be entirely repealed: to repeal but half of it was of very little benefit to the agricultural interest, and of none at all to the consuming classes. The exemptions to the payment of the income tax should be more numerous. Real property should be compelled to

pay probate and legacy duties. The extension of the house tax to benefit the farmer was warmly disapproved of. Such were a few of the hostile criticisms passed upon the recent financial statement, and it soon became evident that the chancellor of the exchequer would have to do battle to carry out his measure.

The first to open fire was the member for the University of Oxford. Already Mr. Gladstone had displayed the gifts and faults which have since characterized him—a sound judgment, marred by an impulsiveness which has often caused him to arrive at conclusions he afterwards felt himself bound to abandon; a splendid activity of temperament, marred by a feverish energy which has made him give the same consideration to petty details as to important matters, consequently much to the diminution of the force of his supervision; a magnificent eloquence, often marred by a verbosity which overwhelms his ideas in a flood of words; he possesses a great knowledge derived from books, but has no knowledge derived from men; he is a statesman with the prejudices of the theologian and the views of the bookworm; a man so wholly under the influences of the moment as to defeat all calculations as to what his next policy or his future opinions will be. Mr. Gladstone had entered parliament some few years before Mr. Disraeli. He had attached himself first to the Tory interest, and had subsequently thrown in his fortunes with Sir Robert Peel. After having served as a junior lord of the treasury, and an under-secretary for the colonies, he had accepted office in 1841 as vice-president of the board of trade and master of the mint. In this position it was his duty to defend the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel; and the revision of the tariff in 1842 was almost entirely due to his industry and grasp of the principles of finance. He had presided over the board of trade, and had afterwards held the seals as secretary of state for the colonies. On Lord Derby succeeding to power, Mr. Glad-

stone refused to take office in the new administration, and contented himself with posing as one of the most trenchant critics of the government the Peel party possessed. He had entered parliament through the Newcastle interest as representative for Newark; but in 1847 he had been returned as one of the members for the University of Oxford. Already there could be detected in his speeches, we will not say the malevolence, but that imperfect sympathy with which he has appeared throughout his life to be animated in all his political relations with Mr. Disraeli. The member for Bucks was always "the right hon. gentleman," never once, or on any occasion, "my right hon. friend, if he will permit me so to call him."

A few nights after the budget had been laid before the House, Mr. Gladstone rose to make his objection to the reconstruction of the income tax, as applied to Irish fund-holders. They had not, he said, been asked to decide upon a simple continuance of the income tax, but upon its reconstruction. And one of the chief features of this reconstruction was, that holders of the public funds were to pay income tax, contrary to the teaching of Mr. Pitt and to the Act of 1801. Mr. Pitt had declared that no distinct tax should be laid on the stockholder, although in levying a tax upon all income the stockholder was necessarily to pay his share. Mr. Pitt took no cognizance of the quality of income; his was a personal tax on individuals in respect to their income; whilst Mr. Disraeli's plan went direct to quality—to the source of the income, to its nature and permanence. It was no answer to say that Mr. Pitt's income tax had already broken faith with the public creditor; it had not done so. Those who lent the money perfectly understood that they were to be exempt from special taxes only. Mr. Disraeli easily refuted these illogical objections. He asserted that there would be no breach whatever of the agreement with the public creditor in the proposed reconstruction. Mr. Pitt, in his speech, December 3, 1798,

had said, "I shall have no hesitation in submitting to the committee, that when a general assessment upon income is to take place, no distinction ought to be made as to the sources from which that income may arise. . . . Whenever an idea has been started of imposing upon the stockholders separately and distinctly any sort of tax, I have reprobated the attempt as utterly inconsistent with the good faith of public engagement. But the matter is materially reversed when a tax is to be levied on the income of every description of persons in the realm, when it is no longer in the power of the stockholder to say, 'I could avoid this tax by removing my property from the funds to landed security or to trade.' I should say to the stockholder, as one of the public, 'If you expect from the state the protection which is common to us all, you ought also to make the sacrifice which we are called upon to make. It is not peculiar to you; it does not belong to the quality of your income; but it is made general, and required from all.'" Had not Mr. Disraeli acted upon these suggestions? Stockholders had not been taxed 'separately and distinctly;' their property had only been taxed in the same ratio as other properties of a similar nature. An income from the funds was permanent and realized property; and when all permanent and realized property was taxed, why should the stockholder plead exemption? It was absurd to argue that he was entitled to any preferential claims. Admit his exemption, and what was to prevent the country gentleman selling out of land to avoid taxation, and investing in the funds? Mr. Disraeli concluded by saying that he did not wish his budget to be criticised piecemeal, but to obtain the verdict of the House upon the whole of his financial scheme. By that scheme as a whole the government were prepared to stand or fall.

On the 10th of December the conflict began in downright earnest. No one had enjoyed a greater experience in the art of tinkering up budgets than Sir Charles

Wood. Most of his budgets had been thrown upon his hands by committees, and he had passed the session in manipulating them according to the fancy of the House of Commons. It was therefore with no unpractised hand that he began to overhaul a financial statement which was not his own, and to expose all its flaws and weaknesses. He would, he said, comply with the invitation of the chancellor of the exchequer and discuss the budget as a whole; for although some portions of it might well be separated from others, yet most of it so hung together as to render it impossible to discuss one part without taking the rest into consideration. He was somewhat surprised to find the agricultural interest satisfied with the compensations offered them. "What benefit," he asked, "is it to them to have a repeal of half the malt tax, accompanied with an extension and increase of the house tax? What is the description of farms which is now most easily let at the best rents? Those on which barley is grown. What is the crop which pays best at this moment? Barley. What stock pays best now? That which is principally fed on barley-growing land, namely, sheep. If there be a description of land to which no boon is required, and for the burdens upon which no compensation can possibly be wanted, it is that land to which, if to any, a boon is given by the remission of a portion of the malt tax." He did not believe that a repeal of half the malt tax would benefit the agricultural interest at all. The importation of foreign malt would keep down the price of home-grown barley, and prevent that rise which those who advocated the repeal of the malt tax have always expected. He therefore considered that the reduction of the malt tax would give absolutely nothing to the agriculturist, whilst it would sacrifice an enormous amount of revenue. And he was of the same opinion as to the benefit supposed to accrue from taking off half the duty on hops. The county of Sussex and a small part of Kent, no doubt, desired the removal of the whole

duty; but even if such a measure as that were adopted, the advantage to the English hop-grower would by no means be assured. Was it worth while dealing with the hop duty as the chancellor of the exchequer proposed to deal with it? There might be reason in taking off half the malt tax, since the half that remained was worth preserving; but was half the hop duty worth retaining? They would have all the excise restrictions and all the inconveniences, whilst the whole duty was but a trifle. Now, if there were a sound principle with regard to an excise duty it was this—do not maintain an excise duty unless it brings a considerable accession to the revenue. Therefore, suggested Sir Charles, either leave the duty alone or repeal it altogether.

He considered that there were other duties which might be far more advantageously repealed than those on malt and hops. It would no doubt, he said, be a remarkably agreeable thing to chancellors of the exchequer if they could do without revenue at all; but since that was impossible, all that they could do was to retain those taxes which were the least objectionable and the least expensive in their collection. Now it was admitted on all sides that the malt tax was the least objectionable of all taxes; the paying of it was less felt and less obnoxious than the paying of any other; whilst no tax was collected at so small an expense in proportion to the revenue derived. Why then reduce so innocent a tax, especially when such reduction would neither benefit the agricultural interest nor the consumer, but simply be of service to the maltster and the brewer? If taxes were to be reduced let the chancellor of the exchequer reduce the protective duty on timber, or the duties on butter and cheese, or the soap duties, or remove some of the inequalities of the assessed taxes. There were various duties which could be taken off with far more beneficial results to the community at large than the malt tax. He, however, approved of the proposition with regard to the tea duty, and of the mode in which it was pro-

posed to deal with it. Two years ago he himself contemplated a similar arrangement, only he thought the window duty under the then existing circumstances had a prior claim to the tea duty. With regard to the house tax he had never swerved from his opinion that it was a good one. He should not have proposed it, had he not thought so. He did not think there was any peculiar virtue in a limit of £20; he adopted that limit because he was proposing the house tax not for the first time, but as a commutation for the window duty, and he did not wish to extend the tax further than would be sufficient to include the houses which already paid the window duty. He did not oppose the extension of the house tax, though he entertained strong objections to extending it to houses of precisely £10. Nor was there, he considered, any occasion at the present moment to alter that tax.

"Indeed," said Sir Charles, "your increase of the house tax seems to me to be utterly needless and impossible. I am not at all averse to direct taxation within reasonable limits; but with regard to the house tax and all other direct taxes, if you wish to retain them at all, keep them light and popular in times of prosperity and peace, because they are your great resources in times of difficulty. Suppose a war were to arise, you cannot increase your indirect taxation, for that would be to add to the price of imported articles necessarily raised by the increased freight of war, the further burthen of heavier duties; but you must have recourse to direct taxation, and it is quite fair you should. It is fair and proper, for instance, that the housekeepers of this metropolis should be taxed for the defence of their homes; but if you double the tax now, when there is no pressure, I tell you that you will make the house tax so unpopular that it cannot be maintained. You are sacrificing one of the great resources of revenue which you ought to reserve for times of pressure; you are imperilling, by a needless and uncalled-for increase, that

very direct taxation which you are so anxious to maintain."

Sir Charles Wood then proceeded to examine the financial result of the budget. They were told that they were to have some wonderful financial phenomenon. "It was thought," continued the speaker, "that the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, had some scheme by which everybody would be blessed with an abundance of money, which would put money into everybody's pocket, and take none from anybody; but now it seems that money will be taken out of many of our pockets, and that nothing will be put into those of other people. Now, I am disposed to bear my willing testimony to the eloquence and ability with which the right hon. gentleman introduced his financial scheme to the House; but what is the wonderfully new principle of finance which distinguishes the budget of the right hon. gentleman? It may be right, or it may be wrong; but where is the novelty? It is simply that which has been done before. The right hon. gentleman reduces indirect and increases direct taxation; but is there anything wonderfully new in that? I will not enter into any discussion of their respective merits. I will confine myself to the more practical view of the subject; and I say there is this fault, that with regard to indirect taxes, with one exception (tea), the taxes dealt with are ill-selected and ill-handled, and the right hon. gentleman deals with direct taxation so as to make it needlessly oppressive." He then criticised at length Mr. Disraeli's figures, and discovered that the surplus was really no surplus at all; since it was not income arising from taxation, but was obtained by applying to the ways and means of the year a sum of money, the repayment of loans for public works, which ought to be applied to the repayment of the debt caused by the creation of the loan. He also contended that Mr. Disraeli had miscalculated several of his receipts, and had consequently much

exaggerated the financial estimate for the ensuing year.

But the *bête noire* of the whole scheme was, in the eyes of Sir Charles, the new regulations as to the liability of income tax. He warmly objected to bringing the income tax down to £100 on incomes derived from professions, and to £50 on incomes received from property, to extending it to the funds and salaries in Ireland, and to making a distinction in the rate on different schedules. "Now, how often," cried the member for Halifax, "have we heard from those benches opposite that the income tax was justified only by the necessity of the circumstances under which it was imposed? How often have hon. members opposite urged that it ought to be a temporary tax—that it was imposed as a temporary tax—that it ought to be considered as such—and that the first surplus revenue should be devoted to reducing the income tax? And these are the men who, in a state of prosperity, with no financial difficulties except those which they create themselves, propose to extend to the poorer classes the taxes which they themselves consider so obnoxious!" How could they, he asked, defend the Irish part of their scheme, in which they taxed the fundholder in Ireland while they left the great landed proprietors untaxed? The Irish fundholder was to be taxed as well as the person who received a salary, while the great landed proprietor was untouched. Yet that was what they called justice! He deemed it most unwise to extend the income tax to Ireland. Ireland had sufficient burdens in her present state, and it was grievous and unjust to press her down with additional taxation. The imposition of a tax upon the Irish fundholder was a breach of faith. To tax funds paid in Ireland, and not to tax income derived from land in Ireland, were contrary to the provisions of the act as regards the fundholder.

Sir Charles Wood then concluded with a piece of advice which had often been tendered to him, and which it was now with a truly

vindictive pleasure he had the opportunity of offering to a rival. "I think," said he, addressing Mr. Disraeli in the most marked manner instead of the Speaker, "that your proposed mode of dealing with the taxation of the country is most visionary and most rash. No one in his senses would attempt, in one and the same year, to deal with £6,000,000 of the tea duties and £5,000,000 of the malt tax. No one would attempt, in one and the same year, to increase two direct taxes—the income tax and the house duty—and to bring under their operation so many persons who have hitherto been altogether exempted. I therefore advise the right hon. gentleman to take back his budget and re-examine it. Give us your reduction of the tea duties: you can do that without increasing our burdens. Give up altogether your house tax and the malt tax. Then you will have a budget which, as far as taxes go, may be supported. You need not," consolingly remarked Sir Charles, who was certainly an authority on the subject of humiliation or the contrary in this matter, "be ashamed to take back your budget. Mr. Pitt was compelled to do so. You need not be ashamed of doing what he did. Lord Liverpool's government was reduced to do that, and the right hon. gentleman cannot pretend that his government is as strong as Lord Liverpool's was. Take till after Christmas to consider what you will do, for I want you to re-construct your own budget. Take the advice of the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of Oxford, for it is obvious you have not considered the details of your budget. Either you know nothing about it, or you have recklessly abused the knowledge which you possess. My hon. friend the member for the North Riding (Mr. Cayley) talks of the consequences of rejecting this resolution. For my part I know of no consequences but an amended budget, and not a budget which, as it at present stands, imperils direct taxation, tampers with the credit, and tarnishes the good faith of the country."

In the course of the debate on the inhabited house duty, Mr. Gladstone criticised the conduct of the government in endeavouring to vote away taxes before the ways and means had been secured. It was contrary, he said, to the custom of the House of Commons. Taxation should not be remitted until the government were sure of the ways and means for the year; it was utterly opposed to parliamentary etiquette and all rule to call upon the House to settle the question of the house tax and to remit duties, until the House had recognized the principle of the property and income tax. This objection brought up Mr. Disraeli. "I am told," he said, "that I ought to take the course usually taken by the chancellor of the exchequer under the circumstances of bringing forward a financial statement. I want to know what parallel there is between the circumstances in which the present government is placed and the ordinary position of the chancellor of the exchequer in bringing forward his financial statement. Have we not been taunted from the beginning that we are avoiding bringing forward our measures? Have not the most vulgar insinuations—not heard, of course, in this House—been made that we are clinging to office if not to power, and evading that responsibility which attaches to every government of coming forward and vindicating the policy which we recommend? The policy which we recommend is a distinct policy. I said on Friday last that, with a view to assimilate our financial system to the new commercial system now universally acknowledged and established, I had, on the part of the government, to bring forward measures for this purpose; and now I am taunted and told I ought to have followed the miserable routine of commonplace circumstances. I feel persuaded that the course I have taken is right. I feel persuaded that we ought not to avoid a free and frank encounter on the policy we recommend. I have endeavoured to place that policy without reserve before the House. Nothing is farther from our desire

than to shrink from the decision of the House."

A special and peculiar knowledge is appreciated by nobody more than by the House of Commons. A member, no matter how uneducated or how halting and imperfect his delivery, who knows something which other men do not know, is always sure of an attentive hearing when imparting information on his own especial subject. During the debate on Mr. Disraeli's budget, many erroneous statements were made as to the influence of the reduction of the malt tax upon the brewing trade. It was, however, left for Mr. Lowe, who had but recently returned from the colonies with a high reputation for legislative ability, and who then represented Kidderminster, to stultify himself the most by the observations he offered upon a subject of which he not only knew nothing, but upon which he had not even the tact to conceal his ignorance. In the course of his remarks upon the malt tax he asserted that there was no monopoly "so close, so complete, and so circumscribed as that of the brewers;" that the brewing trade required an enormous capital to start with; that malt did not want keeping, and the fresher it was the better; that the brewers maintained the price of beer, and therefore any reduction in the tax would result in no benefit to the consuming classes; and that it was a mystery to him why the month of October was fixed upon for bringing into operation the half repeal of the malt tax. For these reasons the member for Kidderminster objected to the repeal of the malt tax, since it would "injure our revenue in a most vital point, and all merely for the sake of a few gentlemen for whom he had a deep respect, but who were certainly no great objects of compassion at present."

These fallacies were ably exposed by Mr. Bass, the member for Derby. There was, replied the eminent brewer, no monopoly at all in his trade. There was nothing to prevent Mr. Lowe himself from becoming a brewer to-morrow; and

as for the "enormous capital" spoken of by the member for Kidderminster to commence the brewing trade, he (Mr. Bass) knew of men holding their own successfully as brewers who possessed no capital beyond a thousand or two. "The fact was," said Mr. Bass, "there was no monopoly—all that was wanted were industry and superior skill in the application of large sums of money. Why, they might as well say that the right hon. gentleman opposite, the chancellor of the exchequer, had got a monopoly because he had more brains than any of them." Mr. Lowe, continued his critic, evidently did not understand either malting or brewing; and when that gentleman talked of brewing fresh beer with fresh malt, it was very evident that he was much better acquainted with other matters than with the brewing business. Mr. Disraeli, said Mr. Bass, had wisely deferred commencing the reduction of the malt duty till October; because if he had reduced it at once, he would have thrown the whole brewing trade into confusion. The malting season began about the first of October and ended about the first of May; and from the first of May to the first of October there was a general cessation in the process of malting. A brewer was obliged to begin brewing with a stock of malt amounting to very near one-third of his annual consumption; how could he do that unless he was allowed to have a stock of malt on hand? Therefore, brewing fresh beer with fresh malt, as suggested by Mr. Lowe, was impossible and altogether out of the question. He would advise the member for Kidderminster to get up his facts before he again addressed any audience upon the nature and the profits of the brewing trade. Mr. Bass, though a Liberal, then proceeded to state his opinion why he supported Mr. Disraeli in the reduction of the malt tax. He himself had proposed a similar reduction. He considered that a remission of half the tax upon malt would be most advantageous to the country, of considerable benefit to the producer of bar-

ley, of much advantage to the consumer of beer, and that it would entail very little loss ultimately to the revenue. It had been said, he remarked, that the reduction of the duty would all go into the pockets of the brewers—that over £2,000,000 would be distributed among them—and yet the brewers were to a man all against it! The reduction of the malt tax signified to the brewers more competition, since it would enable the trade to be carried on with smaller capital. It was absurd to say the consuming classes would not benefit. He estimated that, if half the duty on malt were repealed, there would be a reduction, according to the strength of the beer, of from four to six shillings a barrel. With regard to the bug-bear of foreign malt, Mr. Bass declared that he would undertake to say, that if the British manufacturers only had a fair chance—by that he meant if foreigners would reduce their duty—they would supply the foreign market with malt, instead of the foreign market supplying Great Britain. It was not every sort of malt that would produce a really valuable quality of beer; nor was the foreigner to be trusted to supply an article that would produce a desired quality of beer. He was of opinion that those members who had objected to the reduction of the malt tax had not made out their case.

Of the crowd of critics who rose up in condemnation of the course the chancellor of the exchequer had adopted, the most trenchant was perhaps Sir James Graham. He had one or two old scores to pay off against Mr. Disraeli, and the debate on the financial statement was an opportunity not to be lost. He was delighted, he said, to see that great measure at last brought before the House in a tangible shape, and in a manner which precluded the possibility of any evasion, on the one hand, or any exaggeration on the other. It had been observed that one government was very much like another, and so he must say that all budgets, whoever might be their progenitors, had a very great family resem-

blance the one to the other. He failed to see anything in the budget before them which was very remarkable, or which much distinguished it from other propositions of the like nature. Strip it of the repeal of half the malt tax, strip it of the repeal of half the hop duty, and of the question of the house tax, and it would appear to him a very common-place budget, a very acceptable budget, and one about which they would have very little dispute. But these matters had not been eliminated from the statement under discussion, and therefore he must deal with the budget as it then stood. He remembered Mr. Disraeli—it was true it was before the right hon. gentleman had assumed the responsibility of office—laying down the canons by which all chancellors of the exchequer should be controlled. The member for Bucks had said, "That which I would uphold as the golden rule for all chancellors of the exchequer is to beware that no tax whatever, whatever form it may take—whether it be a custom duty, an excise duty, or a direct tax which is imposed—should in its nature be excessive;" and then he had proceeded to say, "complete remission or complete commutation, these are the two principles upon which a finance minister should proceed." "Complete remission or complete commutation," cried Sir James; and now that Mr. Disraeli was a chancellor of the exchequer he began his work by violating his own rules, and remitting half the hop duty and half the malt tax! If they touched the hop duty let them repeal it absolutely; then they would get rid of the entire charge and vexation of collection, whilst the loss to the public revenue would be small. With regard to the malt tax he had invariably opposed its repeal, or any remission of the tax, and he saw no ground now why he should change his opinions. Such remission would not benefit the barley-growing districts, and the advantage to the consumer would be so infinitesimal—a farthing a pot—as not to be desirable. "Now," said Sir James, "I am satisfied that

when any reduction in the price of an article by the remission of taxation, as affecting its retail consumption, is limited to an amount less than the coinage in current use, the advantage of that reduction is not appreciable."

He was also opposed to the extinction of the public works loan commission. It was a legitimate and inexpensive fund, and of the greatest service to the landed interest. From its treasures money had been advanced to the land for the construction of canals, rivers, drainage, bridges, roads, railways, collieries, and mines. The fund had also assisted in the erection of lunatic asylums, gaols, and other buildings. Stop that fund and still a large proportion of those works would have to be continued, and fresh demands would arise. Those demands, he contended, must be met by great sacrifices on the part of the country gentlemen out of their own means, either immediately or by loans effected on terms not nearly so advantageous to them. Why should the chancellor of the exchequer lay violent hands upon that fund, in order to prevent a deficiency solely of his own creation by his tampering simultaneously with two great branches of the taxation of the country—the malt tax and the tea duty—yielding together an income of not less than one-fifth of the whole revenue of the kingdom? Nor did he approve of the extension of the house tax and the income tax, since it would press most severely upon the poor clerk and the struggling widow. The views of Mr. Disraeli upon the subject of direct taxation were incongruous, for he had laid it down at one time that direct taxation, with large exemptions, was confiscation; and at another, that without large exemptions it was impossible. Sir James instanced the manner in which the income tax as introduced into Ireland, and the increased house tax in England, conflicted with those maxims, and showed how unequally the proposed scheme of distinguishing between realized and precarious incomes would work in both countries.

Upon the question of the relative merits of indirect and direct taxation, he held that their admixture was the sound legislative policy; but that admixture required great caution, and the proportions must be carefully regulated. With reference to that point he cited the opinions of Lord Derby and of Sir R. Peel, the latter of whom had declared that, except for a special and temporary purpose, direct taxation could not, in his opinion, be carried to a much greater extent than it had reached already. In conclusion, he repeated the advice of Sir Charles Wood, and urged the government not to press direct taxation far in a time of peace, but to have their machinery ready for such a system in case of emergency.

As the debate proceeded it became very evident that the details of the budget, the more they were criticised in committee, the more were they objected to by the leading members of the Opposition. Mr. Gladstone was especially indignant at the proposal to apply the money borrowed for the purpose of public works to the service of the year. "For the first time within my recollection," he said, "I think for the very first time, and perhaps for the first time within the recollection of men much older than myself, a budget has been presented to us on the part of the government, in which I presume to say it is not professed to provide for the service of the year one single farthing beyond what is absolutely necessary to meet that service. The right hon. the chancellor of the exchequer it is true, upon the figures he has submitted to the House, purports to show a surplus of £400,000; but that £400,000 which he will apply I say to the service of the year, it is simply and solely—and I think it is the first time I have known such a proposition to be made—it is simply and solely so much debt which it is proposed virtually to assign to that purpose. In former years it was found convenient to borrow money for the purpose of lending it out again for useful public works. The right hon. gentleman says it is necessary to

put an end to that system. The repayment of this money will come in this year at the rate of £400,000. On money borrowed for public works coming in, what ought to be done with it? It is a question I am ashamed to ask. There is no man in this House who will not say at once, that money borrowed for the purpose of public works ought to be applied to the extinction of the debt by creating which it was obtained. But the right hon. gentleman applies it to the service of the year. By creating debt for the service of the year, he shows a surplus of £400,000."

Mr. Lowe, who was more familiar with financial topics than with the secrets of the brewing trade, held the same view as to this appropriation. "Let them," he said, "take a case by way of familiar illustration. Suppose that to-morrow a gentleman having a large quantity of land, a large family and no ready money—no impossible conjecture—had an opportunity of putting a son to great advantage in business, and in order to raise the necessary sum mortgaged a part of his estate for £5000, and that the son becoming prosperous sent continually instalments to his father of the money he had borrowed; would the right hon. gentleman say that the owner of the land was acting as the father of a family, or as a man of common sense, if he took those instalments and spent them as he received them as part of his income, instead of doing his duty and carrying them to the current account against the mortgage on his land? Well, that was the case of the exchequer loan commission."

Mr. Cobden took a somewhat anti-licensed victualler view of the repeal of the malt tax. Provided the necessary revenue could be produced without the malt tax he would advocate its total remission, but he would never be a party to imposing a substitute for the malt tax. He also objected to the manner in which the chancellor of the exchequer had put his case. Mr. Disraeli had said that beer, like bread, was a primary necessary of life and that it was indis-

pensable to the health and strength of the labourer. That statement was open to dispute. There was a large and influential body in the country, supported by some of the most eminent medical authorities of the day, who held that beer was not only not a necessary of life, but a very pernicious beverage to the individual. Therefore, whether an increase in the consumption of beer would increase the health and strength of the people of the country was at least an open question. The reduction on the malt tax was to be compensated by an extension of the house tax—an arrangement which was especially hard upon the abstainers from alcoholic drinks. "The teetotalers among my constituents would naturally say," added Mr. Cobden, "we don't want to be relieved from the malt tax; we have already repealed it so far as we are concerned; we are trying by tracts and lectures to induce our fellow-citizens to imitate us; and we think your budget unjust, and we won't have it." Had the chancellor of the exchequer put his proposition on any other ground—on the scientific ground that the malt tax was a nuisance to the trader and that it prevented the farmer giving desirable food to cattle—all the principles of political economy would have come to his aid, and they would be compelled to acquiesce in his project. Then the great apostle of free trade went on to protest against any attempt to infuse compensatory ingredients into the budget, and deprecated the revival of an antagonism between town and country. He denounced the addition to the house tax as unjust and partial, since it increased the existing disproportion of taxation upon houses and upon land. That tax, moreover, fell upon owners as well as occupiers. As to the modification of the income tax, he was bound to give the government credit for what they had done in that way; but here again an undue favour had been shown to the land. He then took a rapid glance at some of the vices of their system of collecting the indirect taxes, many of which,

he said, must be repealed, and the country make up its mind to a fair system of direct taxation. "In short," summed up Mr. Cobden, "the budget does not at all correspond to the magniloquent phrases in which it was introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer. It was not at all worthy of a five hours' speech. Indeed, I humbly conceive that I could have discharged the duty in about an hour and twenty-five minutes."

To the purely agricultural interest, the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer was to a certain extent disappointing. They had expected relief would be afforded them in the highway, county, and poor rates; but all they obtained was a reduction of the duties on malt and hops. Yet Mr. Disraeli, without creating invidious distinctions, could scarcely have benefited them more than he did. Whether, owing to free trade, or to the produce of the mines in California or Australia, or to the absence of competition from the extensive emigration then taking place, the misery and depression which had once hung over the fortunes of the agricultural interest had been removed. "You were formerly in a wretched condition," said Mr. Disraeli, "and I promised you relief; but you are now thriving, with cheap provisions and plenty of work—why then should you be specially benefited when you have no cause for complaint?" The representative of that class, the member for Cambridgeshire put their case very fairly before the House. "The chancellor of the exchequer," said Mr. Ball, "with equal justice and great fairness, had so framed his budget, that it bestowed upon all classes greater benefit than inconvenience; he should, therefore, most willingly give his vote to the passing of the whole scheme. He was prepared to take it as a whole, and as the best which, under the circumstances, he could get. He granted that he expected more; he granted, too, that he wished for more. He had come into that House as an advocate of Protection; but he soon saw he could not obtain that, and he was prepared,

therefore, to abide by the decision of the majority. If the population of the country were to turn round, perceive the errors into which they were led, and demand the restoration of Protection, he should be very glad to see the House once more revert to that principle; but so long as the opinion of the country remained what it was, he considered the question of Protection was terminated. And now, what did he ask them to do? They had annihilated Protection; now let the country have entire free trade. Let them abolish the duties on all manufactured articles—from metal, which now paid an import duty of ten per cent; let the duty on soap be struck off, and let entire free trade prevail. He had given over Protection; he meant now to be an honest free trader."

On the side of the government the speech of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was among the best, and well deserved the encomium passed upon it by the chancellor of the exchequer, as one of the most masterly speeches he had ever listened to. Sir Edward asserted that if any philanthropist desired to confer some special boon upon the industrious classes, the reduction of the duties on malt and tea was precisely that which he would select; for the first articles to be chosen for reduction should be those affecting the physical sustenance of the people. The question was one which affected the whole population. They had cheap meat and cheap bread, then why not cheap tea and cheap beer? The reduction of the tea duties would augment English trade with China, and promote the interchange of goods. The reduction of the malt tax was a bold step in the right direction; for a diminution in that tax so far lessened the great financial difficulty of getting rid of it altogether. But because the question of the reduction of the malt tax was accompanied indirectly with benefit to the farmer, and was accompanied by a double house tax, they were told that it was a question of town against country. It was no such thing. It was a question of free trade against restriction.

"It is a question," said Sir Edward, "whether you will attempt to lower the price of an article of popular subsistence—whether you will remove a check which operates directly against an important branch of the industry of the country; and it is accompanied with a direct tax which would be fair and just, and as such is recommended by all political economists, even if it were not accompanied with any reduction of the malt tax at all. But I suspect that what deprives this reduction in the duty on malt of all merit in the eyes of hon. gentlemen opposite, is the very reason that should induce them to support it, namely, because it removes some weight from that class which has the most cause to dread competition. I fear that if the measure proposed inflicted some new hardships on the agriculturists, and gave to hon. gentlemen opposite a new triumph of class and party; and if all the agriculturists were, therefore, combined against them—we should hear of nothing but the selfishness of squires and farmers, who refused to cheapen the price of beer for the benefit of their poor countrymen." The Opposition objected, he continued, to the house tax being doubled for the benefit of the farmers; but that was simply to say that they objected to the further extension of free trade, when it operated against the other classes whom they represented. They could not object to the tax itself, because it was universally acknowledged, that of all possible taxes a house tax was one of the fairest, because it fell upon a man in proportion to his expenditure. The objection must, therefore, be either to the extension of the area, or to the duplication of the tax; and these objections he briefly discussed. Sir Edward then concluded by explaining the reasons which had prevailed upon him to detach himself from the Whig party and to give his support to Lord Derby, who, he observed, was not an advocate of any single class, but whose object was to mitigate the sufferings of all classes.

After an exhaustive and somewhat acri-

monious debate, which lasted four nights, the chancellor of the exchequer rose up to reply to the strictures of his opponents. Mr. Disraeli was never so happy, both in his tactics and his eloquence, as when fighting a losing cause. Like most men of his temperament, the certainty of success made him often careless and indifferent, and he was seldom seen at his best when commanding large majorities and mildly thwarted by a cowed Opposition. But to be hotly attacked, to be environed by foes, to feel his measures in jeopardy, to have arrayed against him a vast and venomous following—such a position roused all his energies, developed his resources, and gave a keener point to his satire. He was not combative; but when war was made upon him he never sued for peace, and was always prepared to meet hostilities fully in the spirit in which they were offered. On the occasion of this, his second budget, he had been lectured in the scolding tones of lofty superiority; not a little personal abuse had been introduced in the reproofs administered to him; and throughout the advice and the criticisms of the Opposition, spite and jealousy were plainly apparent.

"I must ask," said Mr. Walpole, in his elaborate defence of the financial policy of the government, "I must ask—and I would not have gone into the subject at all unless it had been for the disparaging tone which I think was somewhat improperly made use of—I must ask, Whence is it that these extraordinary attacks are made against my right hon. friend? What is the reason, what is the cause, that he is to be assailed at every point, when he has made two financial statements in one year, which have both met with the approbation of this House, and, I believe, also with the approbation of the country? Is it that you are jealous of his success? Is it because he has laboured hard and long, contending with genius against rank and power and the ablest statesmen, until he has attained the highest eminence which an honourable ambition

may ever aspire to—the leadership and guidance of the Commons of England? Is it because he has verified in himself the dignified description of a great philosophical poet of antiquity, portraying equally his past career and his present position—

*"Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate;
Nocteis atque dies niti præstante labore
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri?"*

My right hon. friend has attained that position, and who will grudge it him? I will not speak disparagingly—God forbid I should!—of the right hon. gentleman the member for Halifax; his power and ability are admitted. But without disparaging him, I think I may say the budget of my right hon. friend may bear comparison with any of his. The best judges in all the country will declare, as I believe they have declared, that by his budget he has put himself on a level with the boldest and, at the same time, with the most prudent financiers whom the country has ever seen. They will tell you, at any rate, that in the greatest emporium of commerce in the globe these plans of his have reflected on him, in the judgment of those best capable of judging on the subject, the highest credit. They will tell you, as you have been reminded to-night, that he has disproved by his propositions the common fallacy which the world runs away with, that a man of genius cannot be essentially and practically a man of business. And whatever may be the result of this debate—whatever may be the fate of the present government—whatever may be the effect of that ill-assorted alliance which I see before me—the country will see, I firmly believe, that my right hon. friend has earned for himself a reputation as extensive as the empire for which he is so greatly legislating, and a gratitude as permanent as the honest generosity of a thankful, enlightened, and reflecting community.

Mr. Disraeli was, however, perfectly capable of taking care of himself. "Sir," he began, "after four nights of criticism, conducted by some of the most considerable reputations in this house, on the financial

propositions that I have laid on the table of the committee, I now rise to vindicate those propositions. If, in the observations which I will endeavour to condense as much as I can, I omit noticing any of the objections which have been urged against those propositions, I hope the committee will ascribe that negligence to inadvertence, and not to design. Having listened with the respect and attention naturally due to such words from such lips, I can conscientiously say that I have heard nothing that, in my opinion, has successfully impugned the policy which, as the organ of the government, I have recommended; and I am prepared to meet the objections which have been urged, and to show to the committee that they are unfounded and illusory." And first he would address himself to that sum of £400,000, which had so moved the ire of the Opposition, and which, under the name of repayments, he had recommended the committee to sanction and adopt as part of the ways and means of the impending year. That proposed course had been assailed in language and in a tone somewhat unusual—certainly not very parliamentary—by Sir Charles Wood, "for instead of addressing his observations to you, sir, he addressed throughout his speech his observations to myself."

There were two points, continued Mr. Disraeli, in this subject; first, Was he justified in recommending that the public works loan commission should be abolished? secondly, if he was justified in that recommendation, was he also justified in recommending that the repayments should take their place in the ways and means? Now what was this department? At the peace of 1815, owing to a surplus population, deficient capital, and numerous seamen and soldiers being disbanded, the labour market throughout the country was much disturbed. It became necessary for the government of the day to take some artificial means of employing that surplus labour, in a state of society where capital was deficient. A department was

therefore established which, by the credit of exchequer bills issued by the state, raised money, and employed that money in what was called "public works." That system continued for fifteen years, and then it was found necessary to terminate the issue. In 1842 an account was taken of the fund, when it appeared that about £3,000,000 had been raised by exchequer bills thus issued; that of that sum £2,000,000 had been paid off, and that about £1,000,000 remained unsettled. To close the transaction that £1,000,000 was funded. Since that date of 1842, it had been arranged that instead of exchequer bills, the public works commissioners should receive for the same purpose a sum of money to the amount of £360,000 a year from the consolidated fund. At the present moment the amount they had actually to deal with was £300,000; for, by a subsequent arrangement, £60,000 were transferred to the use of public works in Ireland.

They had heard, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, how advantageous was that fund to the landed interest for the erection of workhouses, bridges, prisons, and the like; but as a matter of fact it was not so, for the commission charged four or five per cent. on all loans, and country gentlemen found they could borrow money cheaper elsewhere. Therefore, in revising the public accounts as chancellor of the exchequer, he saw a department of no great mark and possessing a large balance sheet, which was lying perfectly idle; for the causes which had called the commission into existence now no longer operated. What was he to do with that unproductive balance of the public money? Sir Charles Wood had said, "We all know how convenient it may be to the minister to have at a particular moment such a fund at his command." It had certainly been convenient; and though he, Mr. Disraeli, had been too short a time at the exchequer to experience any of its advantages, he would show how his predecessors had availed themselves of such opportunities—how the minister of the day

had possessed himself of this public fund, virtually without the cognizance of parliament, and how sums had been squandered which had escaped the vigilance of even Mr. Hume. A sum of nearly £300,000 had been lent to those ingenious persons who resolved to make a tunnel under the Thames, of which not a shilling had been repaid. Battersea Park, one of the most absurd speculations that man had ever engaged in, had received an advance of £150,000. He had before him a list of parallel profitless advances; between the years 1824 and 1850 nearly £700,000 had been lent—not, as Sir James Graham had alleged, to country gentlemen—every shilling of which had been lost to the nation. And these sums were advanced without the House being taken into the confidence of the loan fund—without a single member being cognizant of the fact! “I think the committee will agree,” said Mr. Disraeli, “whatever they may think of the further merit of the question, that in stopping a system so iniquitous, I was only doing my duty as a guardian of the public purse.”

The question now arose, what were the government to do with the repayments to that fund, which would every year come in when the issue was stayed, and which repayments he had estimated at £400,000? Were they to carry these repayments to the balance of the exchequer? “It is no doubt,” said Mr. Disraeli, “of the utmost importance that the balance in the exchequer should be high. That is a very great principle. But after all, the balances in the exchequer are nothing more than the balances of the nation with its banker; and the same rule must apply to a nation with its banker as to a private individual with his banker. Whether you bank with Messrs. Drummond or with the Bank of England, neither would allow you any interest on your balances. It is necessary, therefore, for the nation, as for a private individual, to have a good, ample, and sufficient balance; but it is inexpedient, it is unwise, to have an excessive balance.”

To pay these repayments into the balances of the exchequer would have been the same as locking them up in an iron chest—it would have been unprofitable. He hoped the House would not consider him presumptuous in instructing them in these matters. His own knowledge on the subject was of course recent. “I was not,” he laughed, “born and bred a chancellor of the exchequer. I am one of the parliamentary rabble; but I trust, after all the observations that have been made, I may be permitted to show that I have not neglected to render myself acquainted with these affairs.” He then explained how he intended to devote these repayments to the payment of the debt created in 1842 by funding loan exchequer bills. He expounded the manner in which he had made the £400,000 act upon the reduction of the public debt, contending that the course he pursued had been in conformity with the obligations of the law, as well as with the recommendations of parliamentary committees.

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to justify his estimate as to the result of repealing half the malt tax, which had been called in question, and his having deferred the actual repeal of the duty until October. This last point gave him an opportunity of alluding to Mr. Lowe. “But why fix October?” cried Mr. Lowe; “here is a plot: if we can only find out why the government fix upon October we shall be able at once to penetrate these financial mystifications.” “The hon. and learned member for Kidderminster,” said Mr. Disraeli, “is an accession to our debates. He has shown, on the rare occasions on which he has addressed the House, considerable information; but there certainly is one subject on which his knowledge has been most conspicuous, and that is—brewing. I am surprised that an hon. gentleman who seemed so complete a master of that art, and who made so eloquent a defence of the system of credit to maltsters, should of all men be the person to ask why we fixed upon October for

bringing into operation the half repeal of the malt tax."

Mr. Disraeli then refuted the mis-statements of Mr. Lowe very much after the same fashion as Mr. Bass had refuted them. He also replied to the instance of the mortgage which Mr. Lowe had adduced as a parallel illustration of the fallacy of the proposition respecting the £400,000 repayments. "I beg to offer him," said the chancellor of the exchequer, "a parallel more apposite than his own. I will suppose the case of a careful father of a family who every three months takes account of his expenditure and income, and devotes one-fourth of his surplus to the payment of his debts, a portion of those debts being incurred by advances to his son; but the son, when he makes the repayments for these advances, makes them into the hands of a banker, by whom no interest is given; so the father, instead of allowing the money to remain idly there, takes it into his general account, and, when he strikes his quarterly balances, applies the repayments as part of his surplus to the reduction of his debts. That is my answer to the case of the hon. gentleman, and I humbly deem my instance an exacter parallel than his own."

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to deal with the charge made by Sir Charles Wood, that if the budget were passed the direct taxation of the country would be recklessly increased. There was no truth in such an accusation. Instead of direct taxation being increased, there would be actually less than when the finances were under the superintendence of Sir Charles Wood, though the member for Halifax then enjoyed not only the income and property tax, but also the window tax. And to be charged with recklessness from such a quarter! "The right hon. gentleman," cried Mr. Disraeli amid the laughter of the House, "who says you must not recklessly increase the amount of direct taxation and charges me with doing so, when in 1850 he commuted the window tax for a house tax, first proposed, though

fruitlessly, a commutation which would have established a higher house tax than that which we now recommend, coupled by us with great remissions of indirect imposts. But is this all? Is this all that has been done by the right hon. gentleman, who charges me with proposing recklessly to increase the direct taxation of the country? Why, he seems to forget that he is the minister who, with the property and income tax you have now producing its full amount, with a window tax that brought nearly £2,000,000, came down to the House of Commons one day and proposed to a startled assembly to double nearly that property and income tax. Recklessness! Why, sir, if recklessness be carelessness of consequences, if it be the conduct of a man who has not well weighed the enterprise in which he is embarked, what are we to esteem this behaviour of the right hon. gentleman? We hear much of the duplication of the house tax—an innocent amount; but if the right hon. gentleman had carried the duplication of the property and income tax, I think he might fairly have been charged with recklessly increasing the direct taxation of the country. The most curious thing, however, is that the minister who came forward to make a proposition which nothing but the most grave conjuncture of circumstances could have justified, at the first menace of opposition withdrew his proposition. Talk of recklessness! Why, what in the history of finance is equal to the recklessness of the right hon. gentleman? And what was the ground on which he withdrew this enormous proposition—a proposition which only the safety of the state would have justified him in making? When he was beaten, baffled, humiliated, he came down to the House of Commons and said that he had sufficient revenue without resorting to that proposition! The future historian will not be believed when he states that a minister came down with a proposition nearly to double the income tax, and when that measure was rejected, the next day announced that the ways and

means were ample without it. But then the right hon. gentleman tells me in not very polished, and scarcely in parliamentary language, that I do not know my business. The House of Commons is the best judge of that; I care not to be his critic. Yet, if he has learnt his business, he has still to learn some other things; he has to learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective."

Mr. Disraeli then explained how the government, in providing an amount of direct taxation for their purpose, had been guided by two principles—first, as regarded the income tax, to establish a distinction between realized and precarious incomes; and secondly, to enlarge the basis of direct taxation. In spite of the observations of Sir James Graham, "whom I will not say I greatly respect," added Mr. Disraeli parenthetically, "but rather whom I greatly regard," who had dilated in very touching terms upon the hardship of taxing poor clerks, the chancellor of the exchequer still was of opinion that his measure was just. It had been laid down, argued Mr. Disraeli, by the best authorities that there was no class upon whom the incidence of taxation fell more lightly than upon those who possessed incomes from £100 to £150 a year; it was that class who owned property of £300 or £400 a year who bore the brunt of indirect taxation. With regard to the house tax, he believed it was a reasonable, just, and beneficial measure, and that it would supply the necessary amount of direct taxation. He had, therefore, to decide upon what group of indirect taxes he should operate, and he came to the conclusion that he should act upon those articles which entered into the consumption of the people, and which were subject to the largest impost.

He defended his selection of the malt duty against the various attacks which had been made upon it. He denied that the consumer would not benefit from the reduction of the tax, and that all the profit from the transaction would go to

the brewer. "Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, with his usual happy gift of turning the tables upon the enemy, "I remember when we used to discuss the effect of taxation on another article that similar observations were made. I do not care now to remember from what quarter they emanated, but the effect and object of those observations were exactly the same. Then it was, 'Oh! those villains, the bakers!' just as now it is to be 'those villains, the brewers!' You might reduce the price of corn—you might injure the agricultural interest—you might ruin the farmers and the country gentlemen; but you could not reduce the price of the loaf to the consumer. No; the bakers took it all. Yes; and there were the millers too. The millers were the worst of all; they carried off all the reduction. Well, those arguments had a considerable effect, and there was such a prejudice raised against the bakers throughout the country, that I should not have been surprised if they had been all hanged in one day, as the bakers had once been in Constantinople. At that time it used to be shown that a fall of 10s. a quarter on wheat would not affect the price of bread; and we were told that the bakers then, like the brewers now, were a great monopoly, if not great capitalists; they were a kind of freemasons; and do what you would, it would be totally impossible in any way even to get a cheap loaf. And now—such are the vicissitudes of political life—we have the same arguments from those gentlemen who used to dilate so eloquently on the necessity of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. The great friends of the consumer—the enemies of colossal monopolies—here we find them all arrayed in favour of high taxation for the producer; and here we find them, with taunts to us, teaching all the fallacies which we at least have had the courage honourably to give up. Tell him Protection was dead! Tell him there was no Protectionist party in the country! Why, it is rampant, and it is there!" he exclaimed, pointing to the Op-

position facing him. "They have taken up our principles with our benches, and I believe they will be quite as unsuccessful."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by stating that in his opinion the revenue of the country would be very considerable at the end of the year 1854-55. He believed that a great saving would be effected in the public expenditure by the administrative reforms and retrenchments that were to be introduced. He thus ended:—

"Some advice has been offered to me which I ought perhaps to notice. I have been told to withdraw my budget. I was told that Mr. Pitt withdrew his budget, and I know that more recently other persons have done so too. I do not aspire to the fame of Mr. Pitt, but I will not submit to the degradation of others. No. I have seen the consequences of a government not being able to pass their measures—consequences not honourable to the government, not advantageous to the country, and not, in my opinion, conducive to the reputation of the House, which is most dear to me. I remember a budget which was withdrawn, and re-withdrawn, and withdrawn again, in the year 1848. What was the consequence of that government, thus existing upon sufferance? What was the consequence to the finances of the country? Why, that injurious, unjust, and ignoble transaction respecting the commutation of the window tax and house duty, which now I am obliged to attempt to remedy. The grievance is deeper than mere questions of party consideration. When parties are balanced—when a government cannot pass its measures—the highest principles of public life, the most important of the dogmas of politics, degenerate into party questions. Look at this question of direct taxation, the most important question of the day. It is a question which must sooner or later force itself upon everybody's attention; and I see many who I know sympathize, so far as that important principle is concerned, with the policy of the government. Well, direct taxation, although applied with wisdom,

temperance, and prudence, has become a party question. Talk of administrative reform! Talk of issuing commissions to inquire into our dockyards! Why, if I were, which is not impossible by intense labour, to bring forward a scheme which might save £1,000,000 annually to the country, administrative reform would become a party question to-morrow. Yes! I know what I have to face. I have to face a coalition. The combination may be successful. A coalition has before this been successful. But coalitions, although successful, have always found this, that their triumph has been brief. This, too, I know that England does not love coalitions.* I appeal from the coalition to that public opinion which governs this country—to that public opinion whose mild and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of parliaments, and without whose support the most august and ancient institutions are but 'the baseless fabric of a vision.'"

No sooner had the chancellor of the exchequer taken his seat than Mr. Gladstone, raging with pent-up fury, bounced up and addressed the House. He was reluctant, he panted forth, to trespass upon the attention of the committee, but it appeared to him that the speech they had just listened to was a speech that ought to meet with a reply, and that, too, on the moment. "Sir," he cried, addressing Mr. Patten, "I begin by telling the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, before I come to the question whether he knows his business or not, that

* England certainly does not "love coalitions." The existence of the few coalition cabinets we have had, has been very brief. The coalition ministry under the nominal presidency of the Duke of Portland, which included Lord North and Mr. Fox, came into power, April 2, 1788, and was dismissed, December 18, 1788. Lord Grenville's administration ("All the Talents") came into power, January 26, 1806, and was dismissed, March 24, 1807. George Canning succeeded in forming a coalition cabinet, April 10, 1827, which was, however, dissolved by his death, August 8, 1827; had he lived it is improbable that his administration would have continued for any length of time. Canning was succeeded by Lord Goderich, but the coalition was dissolved, January 8, 1828. The ministry of the Duke of Wellington, which was at first a coalition, but afterwards was Tory, existed little more than two years. Of all the coalition cabinets, the Aberdeen administration, which held office from December 27, 1852, to February 1, 1855, was the longest lived.

there are some things which he too has yet to learn. (*Loud cries of hear, hear! from the Opposition*). And I tell him that the licence of language he has used, and the phrases he has applied to the characters of public men—(*interruption*)—to those whose public career—(*continued interruption prevented the sentence from being finished*). My wish is to keep myself—although I confess I could not hear the phrases which the right hon. gentleman has used, and remain totally unmoved—to keep myself within the bounds of parliamentary order and propriety. And I beg of you, sir, that if in one single remark which I shall make, I trespass beyond those limits, you will have the kindness to correct me. (*Cheers and interruption*). I do not address myself to those gentlemen belonging to the great party opposite, from whom I never received anything but kindness and courtesy; but notwithstanding the efforts of some gentlemen, in remote corners of the House, who are availing themselves of the darkness, I tell them they must bear to hear their chancellor of the exchequer, who is so free in his comments upon others, brought to the bar of this committee, and tried by those laws of decency and propriety which he—(*the rest of the sentence was lost in the cheers of the Opposition*). We are accustomed here to attach to the words of the minister of the crown a great authority; and that disposition to attach authority, as it is required by the public interest, so it has been usually justified by the character and conduct of ministers. But the right hon. gentleman is not entitled to charge with insolence men who—(*Cheers and much interruption*). I must tell him that he is not entitled to say to my right hon. friend, the member for Carlisle, that he regards, but does not respect him. I must tell the right hon. gentleman, that whatever he has learnt—and he has learnt much—he has not learnt the limits of discretion, of moderation and forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House, the disregard of which would

be an offence in the meanest among us, but which is an offence of tenfold weight when committed by the leader of the House of Commons." (*Loud cheers from the Opposition*).

Passing from these painful personal topics to the main subject before the committee, Mr. Gladstone said that he objected to the resolution now under discussion, whether it was a vote for a house tax, or a vote for the budget. He repeated the specific stock objections to the house tax; he showed how severely the additional direct taxes would affect persons of small incomes, some of whom, including the clergy and the yeomen, would come for the first time within the sweep of the income tax. He objected to the additional house tax, because it was connected with the repeal of half the malt tax—a measure which was professedly for the immediate benefit of the consumer, whereas it was a sacrifice of £2,500,000 for a reduction in the price of beer that would scarcely be appreciable. The imposing a tax of one kind to repeal a tax of another was a most delicate operation, and one which required the most jealous scrutiny. The question, however, which lay at the root of the whole discussion was that of the income tax and its modifications. Nothing could satisfy the country upon that head but a plan, not an abstraction—not something seductive which they who proposed it knew could not be carried into effect. There was, however, no plan, and the House of Commons would forfeit its duty if it consented to deal in the abstract with a matter respecting which the theories were endless. Criticising the budget generally, Mr. Gladstone asserted that the chancellor of the exchequer had introduced a new principle, subversive of all rules of prudence, by presenting a budget without a surplus, for the £400,000 he still insisted, in opposition to Mr. Disraeli, was borrowed money, and no real surplus. That right hon. gentleman, he said, had complained of being opposed by a coalition. He (Mr. Gladstone) wanted to know whether a minister of the crown was entitled to

make such a charge against independent members of parliament, and without any evidence. He voted against the budget not only because he disapproved on general grounds of its principles, but emphatically because it was his firm conviction that it was the most perverted budget in its tendency and ultimate effects he had ever seen; and if the House should sanction its delusive scheme, the day would come when it would look back with bitter and late, though ineffectual repentance.

The division then took place, with the following result:—

Ayes,	286
Noes,	305
<hr/>	

Majority against the government, . 19

The division was fatal to the cabinet. Lord Derby proceeded the next morning to Osborne to tender his own resignation and that of his colleagues to Her Majesty. Lord Malmesbury, the evening after the division, made this announcement in the House of Lords:—"My Lords, in consequence of what took place in the House of Commons last night, with respect to the resolutions moved by the chancellor of the exchequer, and in consequence of the unavoidable absence of the prime minister, who has gone to see Her Majesty at Osborne, I shall move that this House do now adjourn until Monday next." Upon that day (December 20) Lord Derby announced to his brother peers in the House of Lords the dissolution of the government, and that the queen had been pleased to intrust the formation of a new cabinet to the Earl of Aberdeen.

A similar statement was made by Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons. "After the vote at which the House arrived on Thursday night," he said, "the Earl of Derby and his colleagues thought it their duty to tender the resignation of their offices to Her Majesty, and Her Majesty has been most graciously pleased to accept the same. It has reached me that Lord Aberdeen has undertaken the office of

forming a new administration, and therefore it only remains for me to say that we hold our present offices only until our successors are appointed. I hope the House will not think it presumptuous on my part if, under these circumstances, I venture to offer them my grateful thanks for the indulgent, and I may even say the generous manner, in which on both sides I have been supported in attempting to conduct the business of this House. If in maintaining a too unequal struggle any word has escaped my lips (which I hope has never been the case except in the way of retort), which has hurt the feelings of any gentleman in this House, I deeply regret it; and I hope that the impression on their part will be as transient as the sense of provocation was on my own. The kind opinion of the members of this House, whatever may be their political opinions and wherever I may sit, will always be to me a most precious possession—one which I shall always covet and most highly appreciate."

A soft answer, we know, turneth away wrath, and the example set by Mr. Disraeli caused a tone of chivalrous good feeling to run through the chamber. "I feel quite certain," said Lord John Russell, "that if at any time in the course of our debates those flying words which will occur at such times have carried a barb with them, it is to be attributed entirely to the circumstances in which the House has been placed. For my part I can only admire the ability and gallantry with which the right hon. gentleman has conducted himself on the part of the government and in behalf of the cause which he has undertaken, in the struggle in which he has been for some time engaged. It is perhaps impossible to hope that those halcyon days will ever arrive in which, in the course of debate, an unpremeditated remark will not occasionally occur which will give rise to some unpleasant feeling; but if ever it should occur in future, feelings of that kind must be done away if the person in the situation

of the right hon. gentleman imitates his example, and disclaims the intention with the same frankness which he has displayed on the present occasion."

Sir Jas. Graham—"whom I will not say I greatly respect, but rather whom I greatly regard"—in his turn could not refrain from saying a word upon the subject. "It would be impossible for me not to avow," he began, "that I was somewhat pained by an expression which fell from the right hon. gentleman on Thursday night. If I had thought that the right hon. gentleman by premeditation intended to wound me, my feelings would be far different, and it would be my duty to express them in a different manner. But I am not conscious that I have ever, in the course of the debate, said anything with the intentional purpose to wound the feelings of the right hon. gentleman, and I could not believe that, without provocation, he gave expression to words intended to wound me. I was confident, therefore, that the expression that had pained me was without premeditation, and what the right hon. gentleman has just said to-night has confirmed that impression. There is no member of this House so deeply attached to freedom of debate as I am. In the course of debates here, I have certainly myself used unguarded expressions to others, and should consequently be the last person to feel resentment after receiving an explanation. At the same time, I cordially join in what has fallen from my noble friend the member for the city of London. I have never failed to admire the talents of the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer, and I also must say, under great difficulties he has conducted the cause of the government in the last ten months in this House with signal ability. I shall not for one moment recollect the expression to which I have thought it my duty to refer, and I hope my conduct in this House will, at all times, insure some portion of its respect."

Nor was Sir Charles Wood, who had been taught that "petulance was not sarcasm, nor

abuse invective," a whit less generous in his acceptance of the apology. He had not been conscious, he said, of having used any expressions beyond the fair limits of debate; indeed, in the opinion of those around him, the attack made upon him had been quite uncalled for. "I think it fair to say this in my own defence," he continued, "though at the same time I am ready to admit, that feeling strongly as I did on the question, I may in the heat of debate have been betrayed into a warmth of expression which it was far beyond my intention to use. Having said thus much in my own defence, I beg to add that I accept the expressions which have just fallen from the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, in the same frank spirit in which he has uttered them. He must, I am sure, feel with me, that after the terms of reciprocal kindness in which we have always communicated with each other heretofore, it would ill become either of us to indulge in personalities. I will only say further respecting any expression of mine that may have given pain to the right hon. gentleman, that there is no expression of courtesy towards him that I am not ready and willing to make. I am most anxious that our debate be conducted with the utmost courtesy and good feeling, and I am sorry that anything should have arisen to give a different character to our proceedings." It was not without reason that Lord Palmerston had said that the House of Commons was an assembly of gentlemen.

Thus fell the Derby, or as it has been called on account of the dominant influence exercised over it by the chancellor of the exchequer, the Derby-Disraeli government. Its overthrow was due to no faults of maladministration, but to the factious combination of three parties in the House of Commons, who were determined from the very first not to allow a cabinet which had once opposed the principles of free trade to continue in office. During the few months the Derby ministry held power it had introduced various wise measures of reform;

its foreign policy had been energetic without being aggressive; whilst its financial schemes, in spite of the organized hostility they then encountered, have offered not a few valuable hints—witness, for example, the reduction of the tea duties—to succeeding chancellors of the exchequer.

“My lords,” said the Earl of Derby in the Upper House on his resignation of office, “for my own part I need hardly say that, personally to myself, the surrender of office is no sacrifice and costs no pain in personal feelings. It would indeed be a deep mortification to me if, in resigning the trust reposed in my hands by my sovereign, I left the country in a less advantageous position than I found it; but I rejoice to think that, short as has been the period during which I and my colleagues have held office, that period has not been without some advantage to the country; that period has not elapsed without some beneficial measures having been carried; and that we shall leave the country in a condition of as great peace and tranquillity as we found it. My lords, I have no hesitation in saying, that in regard to the foreign relations of the country, we leave it in a more advantageous state—that our foreign relations are in a more friendly and in a more satisfactory position—than when my noble friend, the foreign secretary (Lord Malmesbury), received charge of that department. . . . If we look to the department of law we shall find that greater improvements and reforms have taken place in that department during the last twelve months, than

have taken place for many years previous—reforms of a magnitude and importance which have gained the acknowledgments both of the members of this House and of the country at large. . . . I take no credit to the present government for the state of our finances; but I think I may take credit for our having done this—for having for the first time broken the apathy, the dangerous apathy, which for so many years has existed to the injury of the public service, in regard to the internal defences of this country. And if we leave the affairs of this country in such a state that there is no fear of hostility from abroad—in a state of friendly relations with all the great powers—we leave it also in a condition of self-defence, which is partially effected, and towards the full completion of which we have laid a ground which, I trust, will not be abandoned by those who may succeed us—who, I trust, will not be neglectful of those great elements of self-defence which we have called into operation—the old or constitutional force of the militia, and the increase of that naval force on which primarily, and in the first instance, the safety and honour of the country depend. My lords, we leave the administration with the country in a state, I hope, of tranquillity, of contentment, and of prosperity; at peace with all foreign powers—with increased, if not with fully accomplished means of self-defence and self-dependence. Under these circumstances it is no personal sacrifice to us to surrender the reins of office.”

CHAPTER XI.

CLOUDS IN THE EAST.

LORD ABERDEEN, an amiable and accomplished man, but who lacked the decision of character and the absence of prejudice requisite to lead a cabinet, had seen no little service in the state before having been called upon to form an administration. Twice he had held the seals as secretary of state for foreign affairs, and it was well known that the late Sir Robert Peel had entertained a high opinion of his talents. A scholar, a careful speaker, a man who thought much, almost too much, before he acted, an able composer of state papers, and of sound judgment when he was not too fearful of responsibility, he was one of those men who are excellent administrators under the guidance of some commanding spirit, but who, from the habit of relying upon others, become feeble and incompetent, owing to a too great sensitiveness to public opinion, when compelled to lead and organize. Overawed by the responsibilities of their situation, they regard every question from so many points of view, that they prefer rather to remain stationary than to adopt any decided course of action. The ministry formed by Lord Aberdeen was a singularly strong one. With the exception of Mr. Disraeli, it enrolled within its ranks every member of marked ability in the House of Commons. Lord Cranworth held the great seal; Mr. Gladstone superintended the finances as chancellor of the exchequer; Lord John Russell controlled diplomacy from the foreign office; Lord Palmerston, who wished to extend his knowledge of administration, presided over the internal affairs of the country as home secretary; to the Duke of Newcastle was intrusted the supervision of our colonies; Sir James

Graham was once more ruling naval matters at the Admiralty; Mr. Sidney Herbert was secretary at war; Sir Charles Wood, as president of the board of control, was not allowed the opportunity of introducing any further blundering budgets; Lord Granville sat as president of the council; the Duke of Argyle held the privy seal; the Marquis of Lansdowne had a seat in the cabinet without office. It was not, therefore, without some reason, that the Aberdeen administration was christened "All the Talents."

The ministerial programme was soon announced. On the meeting of the Houses after the adjournment, Lord Aberdeen laid before his brother peers the course the new government intended to pursue. With regard to foreign powers, they would adhere to the principle which had been pursued for the last thirty years, and which consisted in respecting the rights of all independent states, in abstaining from interference in their internal affairs, and, above all, in an earnest desire to secure the general peace of Europe. Such a policy could be observed without any relaxation of those defensive measures which had been lately undertaken, and which had, perhaps, been too long neglected. At home the mission of the government would be to maintain and extend free-trade principles, and to pursue the commercial and financial system of the late Sir Robert Peel. A crisis in their financial arrangements would speedily occur by the cessation of a large branch of the revenue, and it would tax the ingenuity of all concerned to re-adjust their finances according to the principles of justice and equity. The questions of education and legal reform would also receive every



RIGHT HON. GEORGE HAMILTON GORDON,
EARL OF ABERDEEN.

attention at the hands of the government; nor would an amendment of the representative system, undertaken without haste or rashness, be excluded from their mature consideration. The government would be conservative in preserving all that was sound and beneficial, and liberal in redressing all grievances that were justly complained of.

A few days after the re-assembling of parliament, Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the Opposition, made his first attack upon the Treasury bench. Events had been rapidly marching in France during the last few months. It was the old story told so often in political revolutions—first a people dissatisfied with their monarchy; then the liberty, equality, and fraternity of a militant and divided republicanism; then the ambition of one individual; then plots, combinations, and manœuvres, until the whip of rods is exchanged for the whip of scorpions, and the republic develops into a military despotism. The *coup d'état* had been successful, and Louis Napoleon had been installed at Nôtre Dame as President of France for the next ten years. Though advised by a state council, a senate of nobles, and a legislative assembly, the whole executive power was really in the hands of the new president. Ambition grows by what it feeds upon, and Louis Napoleon resolved, shortly after his accession to office, to obtain higher honours. He announced to the senate his intention of restoring the Empire, and gave orders that the people should be consulted on the change. France was canvassed, and voted by an immense majority in favour of the restoration of the Empire. The president of the French was accordingly declared emperor of France by the title of Napoleon III., and his title was acknowledged shortly afterwards by England and the rest of the European powers. This elevation to the imperial purple took place a few weeks before the fall of Lord Derby's government, and tended not a little to increase the fears as to the possibility of a French invasion of England.

Shortly before the meeting of the Houses, Sir Charles Wood had been entertained at dinner at Halifax by his constituents. In the course of the speech he delivered upon that occasion (February 7, 1853), after a few remarks glorifying the Liberal policy in the past, and the splendid results that had followed from it, he discussed the question of the extension of the franchise, to which he said he was averse until the people became better educated and more intelligent. "And surely, gentlemen," he cried, "we have warning enough in what has taken place in foreign countries against precipitate and ill-considered measures of this description? There is hardly a country in Europe which, in the last four or five years, has not attempted a revolution. There is hardly a country in Europe in which, I may say, the mob has not for a time gained the ascendancy; and there is not a country in Europe in which the reaction has not been such that, at the present moment, despotism rules from one extremity of Europe to the other, and the only power acknowledged is that of the sword. Take our nearest neighbours. Such a despotism never prevailed in France even in the time of Napoleon I. The press gagged; liberty suppressed; no man allowed to speak his opinion; the neighbouring country of Belgium forced to gag her press; no press in Europe free but ours, which, thank God, he cannot gag! And hence his hatred of our press, that it alone dare to speak the truth. But how has that despotism been constituted? Not by the intelligence of France, not by the intelligent electors; not by the educated classes of France, because he altered the constitution before he put the question of his power to the vote. Twice an appeal has been made in the form in which he chose to put it to the people of France. The votes in France were taken by universal suffrage and vote by ballot." Sir Charles concluded by expressing his fear of French aggression, and that, with so unscrupulous a man on the throne as the Emperor Na-

pooleon, it behoved England to be most wary and vigilant, so as not to be taken by surprise. Sir James Graham had also, about the same time, stigmatized the emperor as a despot, who turned his people into slaves.

Remarks so gross and incautious upon a sovereign with whom we were on terms of friendship and cordiality, were naturally not permitted to pass without encountering severe criticism. Sir Charles Wood had scarcely taken his seat as the re-elected of Halifax when Mr. Disraeli, whose sympathies with France were always strong and genuine, rose up on the order of the day to go into committee of supply (February 18, 1853), to make some inquiries of the government with respect to "our relations with France." His speech on this occasion was one of the most important he delivered during the year. "Their relationship with France," he said, "was the gravest subject of modern politics. For nearly forty years peace had existed between England and France. During that interval the social relations of the two countries had become various and multiplied; for there were no two countries, calling themselves first-class powers, between whom all questions of high policy were so identical. It was therefore extremely strange that, under such circumstances, an idea should seem to have entered into almost every man's brain, and an expression into every man's mouth, that they were on the eve of a rupture with France." He did not therefore think it unreasonable that, on going into committee of supply, when they were about to vote large sums to sustain the armaments of the country, he should make some inquiries on a subject of such absorbing interest, and offer a few remarks before the House went into committee. On such a topic, he said, it was most important that no false opinion should take possession of the public mind.

"I know," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "there are persons in both countries—persons born and bred probably during the last great struggle—who are of opinion that there is

a natural hostility between the French and the English nations. They are persons who may probably be placed in the same category with those who think, or used to think, that five per cent. is the natural rate of interest. But, at the same time, they are persons influenced in many instances by very sincere and patriotic feelings—and their opinions, though they may be inveterate prejudices, are not to be despised at a conjuncture like the present. I know that to persons influenced by such a conviction it is in vain to appeal by any of those economical considerations which are often mentioned in the present day. I know it is in vain to impress on them that, in an age favourable to industry, ancient and civilized communities are diverted from thoughts of war. I know it is in vain to appeal to the higher impulse of that philanthropy which many of us believe, in such communities, in societies under such conditions of great antiquity and advanced civilization, to be instigating the heart of nations. But I think it right to appeal to stern facts which cannot be disputed—to the past conduct of men which, according to the theories of these individuals, is the best test of what their future behaviour will be; and I must say I do not see that the history of the past justifies the too prevalent opinion that between England and France there is a natural rivalry and hostility. I know very well that if you go back to ancient history—or rather to the ancient history of the two countries—that you may appeal to Cressy, and Poitiers, and to Agincourt, and believe there has always been a struggle between the two countries, and that struggle has always redounded to the glory of England. But it should be remembered that these were not wars so much between France and England as between the king of France and the king of England as a French prince—that the latter was fighting for his provinces of Picardy or Aquitaine—and that in fact it was not a struggle between the two nations.

"I take it for granted," he continued, that in considering this point our history must not go back to a more distant period than to that happy hour when the keys of Calais were fortunately delivered over forever to the care of a French monarch; and when we take that view, which is the real point of our modern history, as one that should guide us on this subject, we shall observe that the most sagacious sovereigns and the most eminent statesmen of England, almost without exception, have held that the French alliance, or a cordial understanding with the French nation, should be the cornerstone of our diplomatic system and the keynote of our foreign policy. No one can deny that both Queen Elizabeth and the Lord Protector looked to that alliance as the basis of their foreign connections. No one can deny that there was one subject on which even the brilliant Bolingbroke and the sagacious Walpole agreed—and that was the great importance of cultivating an alliance or good understanding with France. At a later date the most eminent of the statesmen of this century, Mr. Pitt, formed his system on this principle, and entered public life to establish a policy which, both for political considerations and commercial objects, mainly depended on an alliance and good understanding with the French nation. And therefore it is not true that there has been at all times, or at most times, a want of sympathy in England with the French people; but on the contrary, the reverse is the truth, and the alliance and good understanding that has prevailed between us has in my opinion been a source of great advantage to both countries, and has advanced the civilization of Europe. But what has occurred in our time proves, I think, the truth that the natural tendency of the influences that regulate both countries is to peace; because the fact—that, after such extraordinary events as the European revolutions at the end of the last and beginning of this century, the great struggle that occurred, and the great characters that figured in

it—the fact that all should terminate in a peace of so permanent a character as that which has prevailed, proves the tendency of all those causes which influence the conduct of both nations, and which lead to peace from a conviction of its advantage to both countries. I will not, therefore, dwell further upon this point except to express my protest against the dogma which I am sorry to see has been revived of late, not merely in England, although it is too prevalent in this country, that there is a feeling of natural hostility between the nations of Great Britain and France."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to explain that the increase of the armaments of England was not due to the recent events that had taken place in France, for the vote for such increase had passed long before Louis Napoleon had attained to the position he now occupied. Science, he explained, had caused a great revolution in the art of war; and, therefore, ten years ago Sir Robert Peel had felt it incumbent upon himself, in the agitated state in which Europe then was, to commence a new system with regard to our defences, so that we should be fully prepared for any emergency that might arise, and not be ignorant of the new methods by which offensive and defensive operations were now conducted. It thus became necessary to place England in a state of safety and defence; yet such necessity was not caused by any changes in foreign countries, but by the changes in scientific warfare. He did not think there was any occasion to fear France. It was true that in France there was a military government, and that that country was now regulated by the army. "But," argued Mr. Disraeli, "there is a great error also, I apprehend, if history is to guide us, in assuming that because a country is governed by an army, that army must be extremely anxious to conquer other countries. When armies are anxious for conquest, it is because their position at home is uneasy, because their authority is not recognized, and because their power is not felt. It

is the army returning from conquest that attempts to obtain supreme power in the state; but if an army finds that it does possess supreme power, you very rarely find that restless desire for foreign aggression which is supposed to be the inevitable characteristic of a military force. Now, there is one remarkable characteristic of the present military government in France, that that government has not been occasioned by the ambition of the army, but by the solicitation of classes of civilians, of large bodies of the industrial population, who, frightened whether rightly or wrongly by a state of disturbance and as they supposed of menacing anarchy, turned to the only disciplined body at command which they thought could secure order. I am led, therefore, to the belief that in the circumstance that there is a dynasty founded by a conqueror, but which is not a warlike dynasty; and that France is governed by the army, not in consequence of the military ambition of the troops, but in consequence of the disquietude of the citizens—there is no reason for that great anxiety which is now prevalent.”

He, however, fully admitted that prejudice had been excited in England against the third Napoleon for having terminated a parliamentary constitution, and for having abrogated the liberty of the press. “It is unnecessary for me to say,” said Mr. Disraeli, with that noble self-respect which always prevented him from pretending to be—the great temptation to meaner natures on attaining wealth or power—other than he really was, “that it is not probable I shall ever say or do anything which would tend to depreciate the influence or to diminish the power of parliament or the press. My greatest honour is to be a member of this House, in which all my thoughts and feelings are concentrated; and as for the press, I am myself a ‘gentleman of the press,’ and bear no other scutcheon. I know well the circumstances under which we have obtained in this country the invaluable blessings of a free press.” Yet he

reminded his hearers that it was only a century ago since they themselves had abolished the censorship in their own country; and even when the censorship had ceased, they were under a law of libel which for nearly a century rendered the freedom of the press a most perilous privilege. He hoped that if the press was to be free, it would enjoy a complete freedom; still circumstances could arise which might render the liberty of the press far from desirable.*

“Suppose,” contended Mr. Disraeli, “that in England at this moment we had the greatest of all political evils—let us suppose that, instead of our happy settlement, we had a disputed succession. Let us suppose that we had a young Charles Stuart, for example, at this moment at Breda, or a young Oliver Cromwell at Bordeaux, publishing their manifestoes and sending their missives to powerful parties of their adherents in this country. We may even suppose other contingencies. Let us suppose that we had had in the course

* After the Reformation the censorship of the press in England, which had been established upon the discovery of printing, passed with the ecclesiastical supremacy to the crown. A licenser was appointed by the sovereign, without whose sanction no works or pamphlets could be legally published; publications issued without this royal authority brought both author and publisher into dire trouble. At first the power to print was restrained by various patents and monopolies, and under the reign of Elizabeth all printing was prohibited elsewhere than in London, Oxford, and Cambridge; after the Restoration the privilege was extended to York, and the passing of the Licensing Act in 1662 placed the entire control of printing in the hands of the government. Authors of objectionable works were punished by death, flogging, or mutilation, and it was deemed criminal to publish anything, whether of praise or blame, touching the government: a decree which effectually suppressed the few private newspapers then in existence. A few years after the Revolution the Licensing Act expired, and the press was in a measure free. Still the debates in parliament were not permitted to be published; and the stamp duty on newspapers and the law of libel continued to be great hindrances to the development of a really free press. The *Daily Courant*, issued in 1709, was the first daily paper. As we shall see from this biography, the stamp duty was abolished in 1855, and the duty on paper, another drawback to newspaper circulation, in 1861. The law of libel as it then stood was, however, the greatest obstacle to the freedom of discussion in the press. This evil was finally removed by two famous acts. In 1792 the Libel Act of Mr. Fox was passed, which declared the right of juries on any trial or information for libel to give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty on the whole matter. By the Libel Act of Lord Campbell, passed in 1843, it was decreed that the defendant on an indictment or information for a defamatory libel should be allowed to plead its truth, and that its publication was for the public good.

of a few years great revolutions in this country—that the form of our government had been changed—that our free and famous monarchy had been subverted, and that a centralized republic had been established by an energetic minority—that that minority had been insupportable, and that the army had been called in by the people generally to guard them from the excesses which they had experienced. Do you think that under any of these circumstances you would be quite sure of enjoying the same liberty of the press which you enjoy at this moment? Do you think that in the midst of revolutions, with a disputed succession, secret societies, and military rule, you would be quite certain of having your newspapers at your breakfast table every morning? These are considerations which ought to guide us when we are giving an opinion upon the conduct of rulers of other countries.” He wished to speak of the present emperor of the French with all respect; but he candidly owned that he sympathized with the fallen Louis Philippe. “Some years ago,” said Mr. Disraeli, “I had occasion frequently to visit France. I found that country then under the mild sway of a constitutional monarch—of a prince who from temper as well as from policy was humane and beneficent. I know that at that time the press was free. I know that at that time the parliament of France was in existence, and distinguished by its eloquence and by a dialectic power that probably even this, our own House of Commons, has never surpassed. I know that under these circumstances France arrived at a pitch of material prosperity which it had never before reached. I know also that after a reign of unbroken prosperity of long duration, when he was aged, when he was in sorrow, and when he was suffering under overwhelming indisposition, this same prince was rudely expelled from his capital, and was denounced as a poltroon by all the journals of England, because he did not command his troops to fire upon the people. Well, other powers and other princes have

since occupied his seat, who have asserted their authority in a very different way, and are denounced in the same organs as tyrants, because they did order their troops to fire upon the people. I said that I deplore the past and sympathize with the fallen. I think every man has a right to have his feelings upon these subjects; but what is the moral I presume to draw from these circumstances? It is this, that it is extremely difficult to form an opinion upon French politics; and that so long as the French people are exact in their commercial transactions, and friendly in their political relations, it is just as well that we should not interfere with their management of their domestic concerns.” This sentiment was greeted with loud cheers from both sides of the House.

The leader of the Opposition then proceeded to show, by quotations from speeches made in both Houses of Parliament, that Lord John Russell and Earl Grey had on various former occasions expressed their regret at the tone adopted by a large portion of the English press towards the president of France; such a tone they considered was not only imprudent but offensive in the extreme. This brought Mr. Disraeli to the question he wished to ask—What were the views, opinions, and sentiments of the government of Lord Aberdeen on the subject of the relations between England and France? Was he to judge the opinions of the cabinet by the statements of the first lord of the admiralty? Sir James Graham had described the ruler of France, “in one of those pithy sentences which no one prepares with more elaboration,” as a despot who had trampled on the rights and liberties of 40,000,000 of men. Was it by such criticisms, asked Mr. Disraeli, that the cordial understanding with France, which had been so serviceable in various diplomatic and commercial matters during the last few years, was to be maintained? “If I had to form an opinion of the policy of the cabinet,” he sneered, “from the first declaration made by so eminent a member of

it as the first lord of the admiralty, I should certainly be induced to suppose that some great change was about to occur. How are we to account for such a declaration? I will not be so impertinent as to suppose it was an indiscretion. An indiscretion from 'All the Talents'—impossible! Can it then be design? . . . On the hustings there must be allowed some licence, though there can be no doubt that whatever liberties you may take with your constituents, a councillor of Her Majesty ought at least to be careful when he speaks of a foreign potentate. . . . The present government tell us that they have no principles, at least not at present.* Some people are uncharitable enough to suppose that they have not got a policy; but in Heaven's name, why are they ministers if they have no discretion? That is the great quality on which I had thought this cabinet was established. Vast experience, administrative adroitness, safe men who never would blunder—men who might not only take the government without a principle and without a party, but to whom the country ought to be grateful for taking it under such circumstances. Yet at the very outset we find one of the most experienced of these eminent statesmen acting in the teeth of

* We know how severe the Opposition were upon the Derby cabinet professing free trade to please the towns and Protection to please the farmers. The Aberdeen administration, however, was framed on far more elastic principles. "In my opinion," said Lord Aberdeen in his ministerial statement, "no government in this country is now possible except a Conservative government; and to that I add another declaration, which I take to be as indubitably true, that no government in this country is now possible except a Liberal government. The truth is, that these terms have no definite meaning. . . . I trust, therefore, that in the just acceptance of the word, whatever the measures proposed by the present government may be, they will be Conservative measures as well as Liberal; for I consider both qualities to be essentially necessary." The advantages of this double-shuffle were not lost upon Lord Derby. "I confess," he said, "that it does not convey to my mind any very distinct idea, and I hardly think it can be satisfactory to the country. The advantages to the noble earl are obvious from this vagueness; for whatever his measure he can say he had described it. If it is extreme, and people complain that it goes too far, the noble earl will say, 'Well, did not I tell you I meant to be Liberal?' and if other parties say, 'Oh, this is nothing at all—it is a distinction without a difference,' the noble earl can turn round on them and say, 'Gentlemen, I told you at the outset I would be extremely Conservative.' The noble earl and his colleagues, in fact, so far as they are pledged by his description as given this evening, can do what they like."

the declarations of the noble lord opposite, and of Lord Grey, made in 1852, and holding up to public scorn and indignation the ruler and the people, a good and cordial understanding with whom is the cardinal point of sound statesmanship."

Mr. Disraeli next had to deal with the spiteful and unstatesmanlike utterances of the member for Halifax. Sir Charles Wood had published a very lame apology, declaring that he did not mean to speak offensively of the emperor of the French. "I know," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "that the right hon. gentleman is in the habit of saying very offensive things without meaning it. I know he has outraged the feelings of many individuals without the slightest intention of doing so; and therefore, in reference to so peculiar an organization, I can only say that that is a very awkward accomplishment." Yet if Sir Charles had not meant to be personally offensive to the ruler of France, what did he mean by asserting that the press of Belgium was gagged? Was he aware that Belgium was an independent country, governed by one of the wisest and most accomplished of living princes?† "What a description," cried Mr. Disraeli with just indignation, "is given of the position of the king of the Belgians, to say nothing of the Belgian people, when a minister of Queen Victoria publicly announces to Europe that the king of the Belgians is in a state more humiliating than the slaves who, according to the statement of the first lord of the

† The union of Belgium with Holland by the allies, in 1814, had never been popular. Many were the elements of discord between these two countries. They spoke different languages, had different customs, and opposite commercial interests. Between them was all the bitterness of religious hate. The Dutch were rigid Calvinists, the Belgians bigoted Roman Catholics. The Belgians complained that they were saddled with part of the burthen of the enormous national debt of Holland; that they contributed to the building of Dutch ships and other objects from which they derived no benefit whatever. Their discontent was also increased by the unpopular government of King William I., who treated Belgium like a conquered country. An insurrection broke out at Brussels, and the independence of Belgium was proclaimed November 10, 1830. In the summer of the following year Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was chosen king of Belgium. So sound was his judgment, and so frequent were the appeals made to him to decide, that King Leopold was nicknamed the "juge de paix de l'Europe."

admiralty, are the subjects of the emperor of France, and that he permits the press of his country to be gagged by a foreign power!" Was such a charge, he asked, substantiated by facts? There was no slight question at stake in the matter, because if the press of Belgium were gagged by a foreign power, where was the independence of that country? and when and at what hour might not England be called on, in conformity with treaties which could not be evaded, to emancipate Belgium from that thralldom? But what were the facts? In Belgium they spoke the French language, and certain newspapers published in that country, and written in the French language, had openly advocated the assassination of the ruler of France. The emperor of the French naturally complained of such flagrant outrages, and had appealed to the sovereign of Belgium.

And, now, what course did the king of the Belgians adopt? "He acted like a wise and able sovereign," replied Mr. Disraeli. "He did not submit to his press being gagged; he made no humiliating concessions; but he felt that the appeal made to him was a just appeal, that the outrage was an unjustifiable outrage; and he went to his own free parliament and said that it was an intolerable grievance that a neighbouring prince should be held up to assassination by newspapers in Belgium, and in the language read by his own subjects; and he appealed to that parliament to do what was proper. And what was the course of the free parliament of Belgium? I believe, without a dissentient voice, certainly without any important opposition, they passed a law declaring that papers in the French language, or in any language, should not be published in Belgium that recommended the assassination of neighbouring princes; and thus, in the most efficient and constitutional manner, that consummate sovereign terminated a difficulty which threatened his country, in a way most honourable to all parties.

And yet it was not a newspaper, it was not one of those vile prints that counsel assassination, that made the statement that the press of Belgium is gagged, but a councillor of Queen Victoria, an experienced statesman, a statesman selected to sit in the councils of the government (where there is no regard to the principles of the gentlemen who compose it, as that is a question of second-rate importance), selected to take office on account of his admirable discretion, his unfailing judgment, and the certainty that under no circumstances he would say or do anything that could commit his colleagues."

After a few sarcasms upon experienced cabinet ministers babbling recklessly on the hustings, and some remarks as to the importance, in the present state of the Eastern question, of fully maintaining our former cordial relations with France, Mr. Disraeli thus concluded:—

"We have at this moment," he said, alluding to the present state of parties in the House of Commons, "a Conservative ministry and a Conservative opposition. Where the great Liberal party is I pretend not to know. Where are the Whigs with their great traditions—two centuries of parliamentary lustre and deeds of noble patriotism? There is no one to answer. Where are the youthful energies of Radicalism—its buoyant expectations—its sanguine hopes? Awakened, I fear, from the first dream of that ardent inexperience which finds itself at the same moment used and discarded—used without compunction, and not discarded with too much decency. Where are the Radicals? Is there a man in the House who declares himself to be a Radical? (A voice, "Yes!") Oh no!" laughed Mr. Disraeli; "you would be afraid of being caught and changed into a Conservative minister. Well, how has this curious state of things been brought about? What is the machinery by which it has been effected—the secret system that has brought on this portentous political calamity?" Then he

proceeded to answer these questions by attributing the change to the political creed promulgated by Sir James Graham, who had ostentatiously announced that he took his stand upon progress. "Well," continued Mr. Disraeli, "we have now got a ministry of progress, and every one stands still. We never hear the word 'reform' now: it is no longer a ministry of reform; it is a ministry of progress, every member of which agrees to do nothing. All difficult questions are suspended. All questions which cannot be agreed upon are open questions. Now, I do not want to be unreasonable, but I think there ought to be some limit to this system of open questions. It is a system which has hitherto prevailed only partially in this country, and which never has prevailed with any advantage to it. Let us at least fix some limit to it. Let parliamentary reform, let the ballot, be open questions if you please; let every institution in church and state be open questions; but, at least, let your answer to me to-night prove that among your open questions you are not going to make an open question of the peace of Europe."

A few days after this speech, Lord John Russell resigned the seals of the foreign office to Lord Clarendon, on the plea that to act in the dual capacity of foreign secretary and leader of the House of Commons was a strain upon his health to which he felt unequal. Some months later he was appointed lord president of the council. It was alleged at the time that there had been a difference in the cabinet as to the policy to be pursued towards the emperor of the French.

The financial condition of the country was the next subject of importance which came before the popular chamber to be discussed. Unlike that of his predecessor, the appointment of Mr. Gladstone as chancellor of the exchequer was hailed with almost universal satisfaction. With the exception of the landed interest, who knew that the member for the University

of Oxford was not over favourably disposed to their claims, all approved of the selection of one who had made finance his special study—who had proved his abilities under Sir Robert Peel, and who had since by his parliamentary speeches shown himself a financial critic of no ordinary capacity—to the post of keeper of the national purse. The most sanguine expectations were entertained as to the budget Mr. Gladstone was preparing. Taxation was to be reduced, and yet a surplus guaranteed. There was to be no affectation of originality in the schemes that were being drawn up, there were to be no delusive speculations, no flashy promises that could never be fulfilled, or the like; but everything was to be sound, practical, and eminently businesslike.

In a speech of five hours, Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 18, 1853) expounded before a crowded house his financial statement. Briefly stated, it was as follows:—The tea duty (thanks to Mr. Disraeli's suggestion) was to be reduced by one shilling a pound, and the reduction was to be spread over three years; the duty on soap was to be abolished at once and altogether. Mr. Gladstone confessed himself unequal to the equitable adjustment of the income tax, and therefore proposed its entire abolition after a gradual diminution which was to cover a period of seven years. The tax was to be extended to Ireland; but, as an equivalent, the consolidated annuities were to be abandoned. The tariff was to be reformed; 133 articles were to be completely struck out; whilst the duties on foreign butter, cheese, fruit, &c., were to be considerably reduced. The duty on private carriages, horses, and dogs was also to be lowered. The duty on advertisements was reduced to sixpence, and the duty on each newspaper, without regard to its size, was to be fixed at one penny. The scale of licenses was to be rectified so as to make it bear some proportion to the value of the premises rented or business done. To meet the deficiency created by

the remission of taxation, it was proposed to raise £2,000,000 a year by extending the legacy duty to all successions, and by abolishing the exemption which real property had hitherto enjoyed. It was also intended to increase the duty on Scotch spirits by one shilling a gallon, and the duty on Irish spirits by eightpence a gallon. The balance anticipated in the ensuing financial year was estimated at £493,000.

Such, curtly condensed, were the chief proposals laid before the House by Mr. Gladstone in his first budget. To the country at large the measure was popular. The consuming classes on limited incomes saw that they could live cheaper by the various remissions in the tariff; the better classes were pleased with the reduction of the duty on carriages, horses, and dogs; whilst the mercantile classes expected such remissions and reductions to give a stimulus to trade. As cleanliness is next to godliness, the abolition of the tax on soap was also received with much approval. To that large population who are ever ventilating their requirements through the newspapers, the reduction of the duty on advertisements was also welcome. The two great dissentients to the financial scheme were the Irish and the country party. The Irish loudly declared that Ireland was being taxed, contrary to the clauses of the Act of Union, out of proportion to her ability; whilst the country party complained that, instead of any relief being granted to owners or occupiers of land, the revision of the tariff would be a severe blow to the farming interest, whilst the tax upon succession would tend to break up the great landed aristocracy of the country. The continuance of the income tax for seven years also encountered much hostility.

Mr. Disraeli opposed the budget on two separate occasions. The first time was when he spoke (May 2, 1853) in favour of Sir Bulwer Lytton's amendment, "That the continuance of the income tax for seven years, and its extension to parties heretofore exempt from its operation, without any mitigation of the inequalities of its assess-

ment, are alike unjust and impolitic." The second time (May 9) was also on the income tax, when the House went into committee of ways and means. In these two speeches he summed up all the objections of the Opposition to the measure.

The general principles on which the financial policy of Mr. Gladstone was based met with his approval. "I find," said Mr. Disraeli triumphantly, "the principles on which he has formed his policy are identical with the principles which, only four months ago, on two occasions on the other side of the table, I endeavoured to impress on the consideration of the House." The process was the same, though the application of the principles might be different. What the Conservatives had suggested had been adopted; their financial policy had been assimilated to their new commercial system; the deficiency created by the remission of taxation had been supplied by new imposts; and the chancellor of the exchequer had not shrunk from attempting to deal with more than the current financial year. These had been all schemes which he, Mr. Disraeli, had recommended in his own financial statement. He amused the House by quoting extracts from the speeches of various members now seated on the ministerial side, but who, when they were in opposition, had condemned the very measures they now approved of. Mr. Lowe had censured Mr. Disraeli, when chancellor of the exchequer, for offering to the country a financial policy for two years. "The wisest man," Mr. Lowe had said, "would have enough to do in attempting to arrive at a correct view of the financial condition of a great country even for a single year." "But now," retorted Mr. Disraeli, "we have a budget for seven years; and not content with this, not content with regulating our commercial arrangements and taxes for that time, they are entering upon financial operations that fix the rate of interest for nearly half a century. Really, for statesmen who will not say one thing to-day and another to-morrow to win an ephemeral popularity, for men who will not sacrifice

their opinions for an object of such a character, I think this is rather a troublesome contrast to have occurred within the space of four months, the only difference in the circumstances of the case being, that the honourable member for Kidderminster of four months ago (Mr. Lowe) is now the secretary of the board of control."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to criticise the budget in detail. He objected to the income tax being continued for seven years; for he was not in favour of those new-fangled doctrines which asserted that it was dangerous to have a large amount of revenue dependent on the annual vote of parliament. Nor did he approve of the manner in which the income tax was to be assessed; for he plainly showed that as the impost was levied at the same rate upon the profits of trade—which were of the nature of a terminable annuity—as upon the interest derived from realized property, it pressed unjustly upon the great supporters of the government—the commercial classes. He did not believe, said Mr. Disraeli, with his usual prescience, that at the end of seven years, as Mr. Gladstone had stated, the income tax would be abolished. The spirit of the age was hostile to the abrogation of that tax. Considering the circumstances which had occurred during the last ten years, a man must shut his eyes to all that passed around him, and be incapable of perceiving the signs of the times—the thoughts and habits of his fellow-men—if he could suppose that the income tax would not take a perpetual place in their revenue. Therefore, if the income tax was to become a permanent item in the finance of the country, as he felt sure it would become, was it wise to extend it to new classes and countries, without attempting to mitigate its injustice and inequalities? "But if this tax is not to be mitigated," said Mr. Disraeli, "and if its inequalities and its injustice are to baffle both ministers and legislature, the best thing to do is to apply your surplus and accruing income as you receive it, to the reduction of an impost which no min-

ister can manage and no people can long endure."

With regard, continued the leader of the Opposition, to the general opinion which he entertained respecting the financial policy recommended by Mr. Gladstone, his great objection to it was because it was conceived in a spirit of injustice to the land. The imperial revenue amounted to some £40,000,000 annually, and one-fourth of that revenue was raised by a duty upon a single crop of the British farmer. The average of the united duties levied directly or indirectly upon barley was upwards of 230 per cent. By the reduction of the tea duties, tea would be brought into increased competition with those beverages which were prepared from the productions of the British farmer. Tea would probably become a substitute for spirits and beer, which were produced from barley. The farmer would have to contend against China and France, and yet was not to be relieved from his burdens. If they lessened the indirect taxation upon Chinese tea and upon French wines, they were bound simultaneously to reduce the enormous imposts that existed upon the malt and spirits made from British produce. No one could question the policy or the wisdom or the justice of such a proposition. Yet the government preferred to take an exactly opposite course. Practically they said this to the English farmer and producer—"You will meet this increased competition with increased indirect imposts, and in addition to all this, to sustain you in the contest, we are going to put on you an income tax." "That," said Mr. Disraeli, "is the position of the cultivator of the soil. What is the condition of the proprietor of the soil—the proprietor of the soil, who has been told to devote his capital to the improvement of his estate? You are going to propose a tax, which you call extending the legacy duties to land, which will act as a direct tax of very considerable amount upon all real property, and of course if upon all real

property, in a very great degree, if not mainly, upon the land."

He also strongly objected to the tax on successions as unsound in principle. It was a tax on capital. It was unsound in principle with regard to personal property; but it was much more unsound in principle with regard to landed property, because it led to partition, which, in his opinion, was a very great evil, and much to be deprecated. And again, by proposing this tax on successions with reference to landed property, the government were imposing a new tax upon the land already bowed down beneath its burdens. Instead of real property being relieved from the vast load of local taxation by which it was depressed, it had to sustain additional hardships. It had to pay the income tax and it had to pay a legacy duty. It was for those reasons he affirmed that the whole scope of the budget was conceived in a spirit hostile to the landed interest, and therefore could not meet with his approval. Mr. Disraeli then instituted a comparison between the manner in which the chancellor of the exchequer treated the retail tradesman, and the manner in which he treated the farmer. The project for the licenses of trades entertained by Mr. Gladstone had encountered much opposition from different tradesmen; and at the first murmur the chancellor of the exchequer had hinted that the scale would be altered. "Now, mark the difference," cried Mr. Disraeli, "when a particular class of the population of the towns is concerned in matters of taxation, and when you deal with those who are connected with the land. There is not the slightest doubt I take it for granted that the chancellor of the exchequer would never have proposed the licenses unless he believed them to be just and proper, and not only just, but politic. Well, but he changes his opinion in twenty-four hours, when the trades rise and tell him they will not endure it. But the farmer must bear his income tax, the proprietor of the soil must bear his increased burden of direct taxation,

the cultivator must find his burden of indirect taxation unnecessarily and enormously aggravated, while he has fresh rivals in the field in the article he produces. He murmurs, but he is to get no relief. But the instant a particular class in the country are touched by the minister of finance, orders are given, the delegates wait, and the minister trembles." The country party, he complained, should not be treated with this marked indifference. The towns should not be treated with this marked favouritism. It had been said that the budget was a great triumph for Manchester. He regretted to hear such a remark. He had hoped that the old feud between town and country had ceased for ever. There existed no difference of material interests any longer between town and country.

Then, ever true to the welfare of the land and to the beneficial influence it had exercised in seasons of crisis, the leader of the Opposition thus concluded his effective criticism:—"There is no class," he said, "which has struggled more for the rights and liberties of the people than the country gentlemen; no class has less interest in the corrupt administration of affairs, and no class has a greater interest in the economical administration of those affairs. Gentlemen are very apt to tell us of the weight and importance of the great towns, and that this budget was supported by the members for those great towns. I have already said that there is no longer any difference of material interests between the people of the great towns and the people of the country. But I am told that there are social and political differences. I am very loth to believe it. I cannot but believe that it will be remembered that these great towns are situate in a country of no considerable extent; with no excessive population, with a commerce which, however great, has been equalled; and with manufactures which, however successful, have been surpassed. What then makes the country great? The national character of the country created by its institutions, and by the traditionary

influence impressed upon those institutions. Those institutions are deeply and broadly planted in the soil, and that soil is not the possession of any exclusive class. The merchant or the manufacturer may deposit within it his accumulated capital, and he may enjoy those privileges to which its possession entitles him, on condition that he discharges those duties which its possession also imposes. Then why this hostility to the land? Every man is deeply interested in maintaining its influence. I, therefore, adjure those gentlemen who are the representatives of large towns, to condescend to ponder over these observations, and not to be led away by prejudices; remembering, that we are all alike interested in maintaining the greatness of our country, and that that greatness depends upon its institutions as well as its material prosperity. Should, however, as I trust not, the representatives of towns take another course, then of this I feel convinced, that if they are still alienated from us—if they still proceed in their illusory progress, they may, perhaps, arrive at the goal which they contemplate, they may perhaps achieve the object they have set before them; but I believe they will be greatly disappointed in the result, and that they will only find that they have changed a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic."

We who, during two miserable decades, remember how baneful upon the prestige of the country has been the influence of recent Liberalism—when the extension of commerce appeared as the sole aim of English politics—have had good reason to make our moan over the fulfilment of the prophecy of Mr. Disraeli. We know what it is to have seen a first-rate kingdom exercising the authority and holding the position of a second-rate republic. Bitter experience has taught us what we have to expect from a political creed deprived of all manliness, and animated by no patriotism. We are not to be deceived by the new nomenclature of things; for Liberalism treats its policy as men treat their vices—

designating the worst actions by the best names. It panders to pusillanimity, and calls it arbitration; it submits to foreign exactions, and calls it diplomacy; it impairs efficiency by reduction, and calls it economy; it sues for peace when under humiliating defeat, and calls it "obedience to the dictates of humanity;" it inspires class-jealousies, and calls it reform; it burlesques rule, and calls it statesmanship: confounding compromise with courage and commercial prosperity with national glory, Liberalism has exhibited to a sneering Europe how easy it is to transform a first-rate kingdom into a second-rate republic. For a few proud years Englishmen ceased to be ashamed of themselves and their country; but now the period of humiliation has again arrived. Lord Beaconsfield gave us the treaty of Berlin: Mr. Gladstone has given us the Transvaal Convention.

But matters of far graver moment than insults passed upon a friendly sovereign, or erroneous projects of finance, were to engage the criticism of the leader of the Opposition. After a peaceful pause of well-nigh forty years, England was to drift into a European war. The causes which led to hostilities in the Crimea have been so fully treated elsewhere, that we shall but touch upon them as they tend to elucidate the policy of Mr. Disraeli. For many years the guardianship and possession of certain places at Jerusalem had been a source of contention between Christians professing the faith of the Latin and Greek churches. These localities, known as the Holy Places, are hallowed from an alleged connection with the Redeemer of mankind, with the Blessed Virgin, or with some of the early disciples. The church of the Holy Sepulchre built upon Mount Calvary, and in which the sepulchre of Christ is said to exist, occupies the most prominent position among these sacred spots. Towards the close of the seventeenth century this Holy Sepulchre was appropriated to the Latins; and though other Christians were allowed to enter it for the purpose of

government admitted the justice of the French claims; and things were progressing very favourably when the Emperor Nicholas wrote a letter to the Sultan, requiring his adherence to the *status quo*. Pressed by these formidable rivals, the Sultan knew not how to act; and as the discussion was prolonged, the Emperor Nicholas gradually disclosed his real intentions. An arrangement was nearly concluded in 1852; but towards the close of the year the Czar began to set the forces of his empire in motion. In February, 1853, Prince Mentschikoff repaired to Constantinople, as extraordinary ambassador from Russia; and although the real nature of his mission did not at first transpire, it soon became evident that the ruin of Turkey was intended.

The points conceded to Russia respecting the holy places by Turkey were deemed unsatisfactory; and Prince Mentschikoff, shortly after his arrival, took his departure from Constantinople. The Czar now published a manifesto against the Sultan, and marched his troops into the Danubian principalities in spite of the strong protest of Turkey. The four great powers now interfered for the purpose of adjusting the question pacifically, and a conference assembled at Vienna. The celebrated Vienna note was drawn up, and since it virtually conceded to Russia all she demanded, was readily accepted by the representative of the Czar. Turkey, however, declined to accede to its clauses unless they were considerably modified, a request which Russia refused to listen to.*

• *Copy of the Vienna Projet de Note, as modified by the Sublime Porte, for which I am indebted to Mr. Kinglake's work.*

[The Turkish modifications are shown by printing in italics the words which the Porte rejected, and placing the words which it proposed to substitute in the foot-note.]

Sa Majesté le Sultan n'ayant rien de plus à cœur que de rétablir entre elle et Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie les relations de bon voisinage et de parfaite entente qui ont été malheureusement altérées par de récentes et pénibles complications, a pris soigneusement à tâche de rechercher les moyens d'effacer les traces de ces différences.

Un iradé suprême en date du 12 mai 1854, lui ayant fait connaître la décision Impériale, la Sublime Porte se félicite de pouvoir la communiquer à son Excellence M. le Comte de Nesselrode.

Si à toute époque les Empereurs de Russie ont témoigné

The Czar, thanks to the vacillation of Lord Aberdeen, and to the sneers of the Liberals at the emperor of the French, was under the impression that England would never fight, that the alliance between England and France was only a sham, and that the struggle would simply be limited to Turkey and Russia; in which case the Muscovite would prove an easy victor. The strained relationship between the two countries now gave way, and Turkey declared war against Russia, October 5, 1853. Shortly after the wrecking of the Turkish fleet at Sinope by the Russians, the congress at Vienna addressed another note to the Porte, expressing the regret of the great powers at the war, and requesting information as to the conditions on which Turkey would treat for peace. In reply the Porte named four points as bases of negotiation:—

leur active sollicitude pour le maintien des immunités et privilèges de l'Eglise Orthodoxe Grecque dans l'Empire Ottoman, les Sultans ne se sont jamais refusés à les consacrer* de nouveau par des actes solennels qui attestaient de leur ancienne et constante bienveillance à l'égard de leurs sujets Chrétiens.

Sa Majesté le Sultan Abdul-Medjid, aujourd'hui régnant, animé des mêmes dispositions et voulant donner à Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie un témoignage personnel de son amitié la plus sincère, n'a écouté que sa confiance infinie dans les qualités éminentes de son auguste ami et allié, et a daigné prendre en sérieuse considération les représentations dont son Altesse le Prince de Mentschikoff s'est rendu l'organe auprès de la Sublime Porte.

Le Soussigné a reçu en conséquence l'ordre de déclarer par la présente que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté le Sultan restera fidèle à la lettre et à l'esprit des stipulations des Traites de Kainardji et d'Andrinople, relatives à la protection du culte Chrétien,† et que Sa Majesté regarde comme étant de son honneur de faire observer à tout jamais, et de préserver de toute atteinte, soit présentement, soit dans l'avenir, la jouissance des privilèges spirituels qui ont été accordés par les augustes aïeux de Sa Majesté à l'Eglise Orthodoxe de l'Orient, qui sont maintenus et confirmés par elle; et, en outre, à faire participer dans un esprit de haute équité le rit Grec aux avantages concédés aux autres rites Chrétiens par Convention ou disposition particulière.‡

Au reste, comme le firman Impérial qui vient d'être donné au patriarcat et au clergé Grec, et qui contient les confirmations de leurs privilèges spirituels, devra être regardé comme une nouvelle preuve de ses nobles sentiments, et comme, en outre, la proclamation de ce firman, qui donne toute sécurité, devra faire disparaître toute crainte à l'égard du rit qui est la religion de Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie; je suis heureux d'être chargé du devoir de faire la présente notification.

* Le culte et l'Eglise Orthodoxe Grecque, les Sultans n'ont jamais cessé de veiller au maintien des immunités et privilèges qu'ils ont spontanément accordés à diverses reprises à ce culte et à cette Eglise dans l'Empire Ottoman, et de les consacrer.

† Aux stipulations du Traité de Kainardji confirmé par celui d'Andrinople, relatives à la protection par la Sublime Porte de la religion Chrétienne, et il est en outre chargé de faire connaître.

‡ Octroyés, ou qui seraient octroyés, aux autres communautés Chrétiennes, sujettes Ottomanes.

1. The promptest possible evacuation of the Danubian principalities; 2. Revision of the treaties; 3. The maintenance of religious privileges to the communities of all confessions; and 4. A definite settlement of the convention respecting the holy places. These points were approved of by the four great powers.

While these events were occurring, the greatest excitement prevailed in London. All through the month of September the country was holding agitated meetings to rouse the government into decided action, and make it abandon its course of culpable delay and irresolution. The cabinet was divided. Lord Aberdeen still hoped that peace might be restored by the efforts of diplomacy. Lord Palmerston, on the contrary, who was the only minister who thoroughly understood the intricacies of the Eastern question, was most anxious that the united English and French fleets, then anchored in Besika Bay, should be ordered to take up their position in the Black Sea. He was overruled, and for a time withdrew from the cabinet on the ground, which deceived no one, that he differed from Lord John Russell as to the measure relating to parliamentary reform, which was about to be laid before the House of Commons. But the country cared nothing at this exciting moment for parliamentary reform, but much as to the development of the Eastern question. The course of events proved that unless England was prepared to encourage Russian aggression, and to place her own Indian empire in jeopardy, she must shake off Aberdeen apathy and delay, and resort to active measures. Lord Palmerston returned to the cabinet, and his views were accepted. The allied squadrons entered the Black Sea, resolved to teach the Russian fleet that there should be no repetition of "the massacre of Sinope." War had not been declared; but everyone felt that it was only a matter of weeks, perhaps of days, before the allied powers and the isolated Muscovite would be at daggers drawn.

Parliament met January 30, 1854. The speech from the throne was guarded, yet showed that the country was prepared for the worst. "The hopes," said Her Majesty, "which I expressed at the close of the last session, that a speedy settlement would be effected of the differences existing between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, have not been realized, and I regret to say that a state of warfare has ensued. I have continued to act in cordial co-operation with the emperor of the French; and my endeavours to preserve and to restore peace between the contending parties, although hitherto unsuccessful, have been unremitting. I will not fail to persevere in these endeavours; but as the continuance of the war may deeply affect the interests of the country and of Europe, I think it requisite to make a further augmentation of my naval and military forces, with the view of supporting my representations, and of more effectually contributing to the restoration of peace." Then with misplaced activity, as if, with the prospect of a grave European war on their hands, ministers had not sufficient to occupy the whole of their attention, mention was made of the measures the cabinet intended to introduce during the present session. The coasting trade of the United Kingdom was to be opened to the ships of all friendly nations. The system of admission into the civil service was to be altered. The laws relating to the representation of the Commons in parliament were to be amended. Precautions were to be taken against the evils of bribery and of corrupt practices at elections. Nor was university reform to be neglected. Not without reason was the Aberdeen cabinet called "All the Talents," when at so supreme a moment in the fortunes of the country it could think of such minor details as to how young men were to become clerks in government offices; how electors were to be prevented from selling their votes; and how one of our two great schools of learning was to be improved. Perhaps, had the government limited its range of

supervision, its grasp of public business would have been firmer and more tenacious.

The tone of the debate that ensued was manly, without braggadocio. England had endeavoured by every means of forbearance consistent with her national honour to avoid hostilities; but now, if she was to have war, it behoved her to carry it on as became a nation conscious of her strength. Such was the keynote struck by most of the speeches. The tactics of Russia hoodwinked no one. "The whole policy of Russia," said Lord Derby, "for the last 150 years has been a policy of gradual aggression—not a policy of conquest, but of aggression. It has never proceeded by storm, but by sap and mine. The first process has been invariably that of fomenting discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the subjects of subordinate states—then proffering mediation; then offering assistance to the weaker party; then placing that independence under the protection of Russia; and finally from protection proceeding to the incorporation, one by one, of those states into the gigantic body of the Russian empire. I say nothing of Poland, or of Livonia, but I speak of Mingrelia, Imeritia, and the countries of the Caspian, even as far as the boundary of the Araxes; and again, of the Crimea itself. But this has been the one course which Russia has invariably pursued; although she has pursued this steady course for 150 years, she has from time to time desisted from her schemes where she has found that they met with opposition, and has never carried one of those schemes into effect where she has been certain to meet the opposition of this country."

In the Lower House Mr. Disraeli delivered a short but keen criticism upon the foreign and domestic policy of the government. An eye-witness describes his personal appearance on this occasion: "On the first row next the table, about mid-way, and near to one of the two green velvet-covered, brass-ornamented boxes, which flank a small collection of well-bound books, in

front of which the mace reposes, sits the ex-leader of the House and ex-chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Disraeli. Familiar as his appearance has been made by the pictorial squibs of the day, scant justice has been done to him even in caricatures. He has nothing of the hollow-eyed, round-backed, Jew-boy look, which has been so liberally bestowed on him. If it be true that his countenance does not come up to the English standard of manly beauty, and if it is strongly indicative of race—and that neither Norman nor Saxon—yet an impartial and candid observer would admit that it has a character striking and even distinguished. He is neither tall nor is he short; he is rather thin; his forehead is high, rounded, and smooth; he has black eye-brows, clear, dark-brown eyes, high cheek-bones, lips firmly set, a pointed chin, and black hair, curling like tendrils all over his compact head, of which one curl is intended to droop carelessly over the brow, but somehow seems to have been got into its place with pains. So of his dress it may be said that it is elaborated into carelessness; but the art is not sufficiently artfully concealed. Its details, its minutiae, are studiously correct. He sits sunk into his seat; his head, always uncovered, reclining forward, so that his eyes appear to be fixed on the ground or staring at vacancy—which they by no means are—and his whole attitude that of the most rigid repose, till what he conceives to be the right moment for being aroused arrives, and the listlessness—which, added to the paleness of his complexion, would seem significant of fragility of body or ill health—is cast off for animation and vigour, equal to a sustained speech of five hours and a half.”

On this occasion, when he condemned the credulity and vacillation of the government during their negotiations with Russia, Mr. Disraeli did not speak for five hours and a half; but vigour and animation were certainly not wanting. He complained that the expectations held out by ministers at the end of last session, as to an immediate

and satisfactory conclusion of the Eastern question, had not been fulfilled. Diplomacy had made no progress. The House was addressed now much in the same terms as it had been then. They were told that negotiations were going on, and that a hope was still held out that those negotiations might be successful. If the government had really resolved to maintain not only the integrity but the independence of the Porte, he regretted the unwise and unnecessary timidity in the language of the address. The tone taken in the speech and address with regard to these transactions between the Porte and Russia, should have been of a higher character. He had heard, however, with pleasure of the cordial co-operation of the queen with the emperor of the French. “I cannot fail to remember,” he said, alluding to the past strictures of Sir Charles Wood and Sir James Graham upon the ‘despotism’ of Napoleon, “though I have no inclination to dwell upon the circumstance at this moment, that little more than twelve months ago, I felt it my duty to call the attention of the House to the relations between this country and France. I thought it my duty to attempt to call the attention of parliament and of the country to certain expressions and certain conduct of eminent personages who, from their abilities and their station, were able to influence public opinion—which expressions and conduct, I was convinced, had a tendency to weaken that good feeling between England and France which, under all circumstances, should be cherished; but which, under the then and present aspect of affairs, was doubly desirable and important. I remember I was told then that my observations were factious observations; but I appeal for my vindication to the language which is now held in Her Majesty’s speech.”*

Mr. Disraeli admitted that the political

* “I have continued to act in cordial co-operation with the emperor of the French; and my endeavours, in conjunction with my allies, to preserve and to restore peace between the contending parties, although hitherto unsuccessful, have been unremitting.”—*The Queen’s Speech Jan. 31, 1854.*

outlook was gloomy; still the programme put forth by the cabinet cheered him. "I can hardly conceive," he said, "that a body of men who are about to embark in—I will not say a great European struggle, though that is the common phrase—but which, in fact, is not only a European but an Asiatic struggle, which indeed may stretch into a third quarter of the globe—for Russia has not only European, but Asiatic and American territories—I say I cannot conceive that a body of statesmen who believe that we are about to embark in such a conflict, who are now preparing to meet such an awful conjuncture—I cannot believe that any body of statesmen so placed would have asked us not only to reform the whole of our civil service, not only to reform the ecclesiastical courts, not only to reform the poor law, but even to reform the House of Commons. Sir, I came down here to-day with some fear—as many of us had—of some awful disclosure, of some terrible announcement that was about to be made to us. I thought we were going to make war upon the emperor of Russia. I find we are only going to make war upon ourselves."

Then discussing the question of parliamentary reform, he said, however inconvenient or unadvisable it might be to introduce such a subject at the present moment, the government were bound to carry out their pledges. The prime minister had formed his cabinet on the principle of the necessity of parliamentary reform—of a large measure of parliamentary reform. Certain members of the government had made parliamentary reform the condition of their acceptance of office. Evasion of such a pledge was therefore impossible. "It may be unwise," said Mr. Disraeli, "that parliamentary reform should be introduced under any circumstances; it may be little short of madness to introduce it under the present existing circumstances; but the ministers must bring in a large measure of parliamentary reform." There was no hope for it; both political and personal honour

demanding it. It was true that Mr. Pitt had pledged himself to parliamentary reform, and that when pressed by a foreign war he had not hesitated to act in opposition to his former opinions. But that precedent would not apply to the present advisers of the crown. Only a short time since, when it was expected that the country was about to be invaded by France, Lord John Russell had reiterated the necessity for parliamentary reform. A war with Russia was no graver than a war with France; and if parliamentary reform was an absolute necessity when we were anticipating hostilities with the Gaul, it was therefore no less a necessity when we were anticipating hostilities with the Muscovite. As soon as the subject of reform came before them he would offer his humble opinions upon it, and he would then point out, as he had before pointed out, with what extraordinary injustice the landed proprietors of the country, and all classes connected with land, had been treated with respect to the representation in the House. "When you appeal to the passions," he concluded, "and dwell upon the importance of what you call the large towns, the fact is, that there are vast populations still larger than the largest towns which are represented only in a most imperfect manner, and who have not nearly the number of members which, according to your principles, they are entitled to. When we come to this large measure, when we come to this bold proposition, as we have been informed, of disfranchisement, when we have to add them to that horde of forfeited seats which the noble lord has been so long and so sedulously accumulating, we shall come forward not with clamour, not with that organized arrangement which is brought into play whenever anything is demanded by what are called the large towns; but we shall come down to the House of Commons and appeal to facts—we shall appeal to principles—we shall ask you to apply your own facts and principles, and to do us justice: but remember at the same time,

that if you award to us that which we supplicate, you will at the same time add strength and reverence to the constitution of England."

The diplomatic relations between the courts of London and St. Petersburg were in so curious a condition that it was not easy to ascertain whether we were at peace or war. "It was a question," said Lord Clarendon, "which it was difficult to answer. We were not at war, because war was not declared, nor were we strictly at peace with Russia. We were in that intermediate state when the desire of peace was just as sincere as ever, but when the hopes of the government were gradually dwindling away, and they were drifting towards war." Meanwhile, every preparation was being made for the active hostilities that might at any moment be declared. The Guards were getting ready for embarkation; volunteers were freely enrolling themselves for foreign service; the transports were rapidly being put into commission to carry troops to the Bosphorus; the government gunpowder mills were working overtime; the Baltic fleet had received orders to sail to the North Sea; the excitement throughout the country was indeed far more indicative of war than peace.

Again (February 20, 1854), the question as to the position of England with regard to Russia came before the House of Commons. Mr. Layard, in a most able speech, introduced the subject, and a long debate ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took a very important part. He thought it essential, the leader of the Opposition said, that the fullest information should be had as to the cause and object of the hostilities which now appeared to be inevitable, in order to avoid such a prolongation of the struggle as had occurred in the last great European conflict produced by the French Revolution. Twenty-five years ago there had been a war between Russia and Turkey, in which France and England had taken part against Turkey, and levelled a blow against her at Navarino, which was indirectly the cause

of the perils and perplexing circumstances they had now to consider. "Now, sir," he said, "I have always felt, that if ever this country were embarked again in a war which might become one of magnitude, if I were in a position which might in any way allow me to induce the people of this country to understand the cause and the object of the struggle in which they were about to engage, I certainly would make the attempt. I have even thought that every nation, this nation in particular, would be much more prepared, and much more willing to make the exertion and to endure the burdens which a state of warfare must induce and occasion, if they really knew why they were going to war, and for what they were going to war, than if they were hurried into a contest by inflammatory appeals to their passions, and carried away by an excitement which at the first moment may be convenient to a minister, but which in a short time is followed by the inevitable reaction of ignorance, perhaps of ignorance and disaster combined."

The only way, he continued, in which he could secure the information which he desired to impart was by "pottering over blue books."* He knew no other source from which he could obtain any knowledge as to the cause of the war. Why were there such things as blue books if they were not to be consulted? What was the intention of those state secrets and those important documents being placed upon the table of the House and submitted to the consideration of members, if, on the first occasion that presented itself to offer an opinion, a minister of the crown rose up and told them they were not to "potter over blue books?" He had pottered over blue books, and he there saw how the present state of things had been produced. The policy of Russia was obviously to obtain an ascendancy over Turkey, not by conquest, but to exercise a particular influence over 12,000,000 of the Sultan's

* Sir James Graham, with his customary courtesy, had sneered at the Opposition for "pottering over blue books," in order to indulge in miserable carping at petty details.—*Speech on Russia and the Porte*, February 17, 1854.

subjects. That was the base of the diplomatic campaign which ensued. The English government had been vacillating and had been hoodwinked. After the question of the Holy Places had been admitted to have been settled, and the forces of Russia were still hovering on the Turkish frontiers, why was an explanation not required of what was meant? Russia had demanded a concession to the Greek Church as an equivalent for the concession made to the Latin Church, but no demand was made by the English government for an explanation of what was wanted. Then followed this stinging criticism:—

“Let us try,” said Mr. Disraeli, “to find out the cause of this war. My Lord Clarendon talks in one of his letters of an alternative, and I shall offer an alternative also. Either the government was influenced by a degree of confidence which assumed the morbid character of credulity, or they were influenced by connivance—I mean by connivance a policy which calculated that it was better that the inevitable dissolution of the Turkish empire should take place by the indirect means alluded to, than that its independence and integrity should disappear in an European war undertaken to maintain them. Now that is an alternative important to decide. Was it credulity or was it connivance? On ascertaining that point depends our also ascertaining the object of this war. I believe the cause of the war has been the conduct of these negotiations during these first seven months by the government. If that conduct has been prompted by credulity, they may carry on the war with success and spirit. The fact that they have been deceived by the word of an emperor may be a mournful fact. It is a lamentable circumstance, but it is an accident to which generous minds may be liable; and the very fact that they are undeceived may animate them to greater exertions and to efforts which will vindicate their conduct to their country and to posterity. If their conduct had been influenced by credulity, it is possible that

you may have a war—a long and a severe war—but it will be a war carried on for great objects, and may end in great public benefit. Russia, by her perfidious conduct—if it has been perfidious—may have precipitated a struggle which perhaps was inevitable. Russia may be forced at the end of this struggle to a position which may secure the independence of Europe and the safety of civilization. You may have a war which may restore Bessarabia to the Porte—may convert the Crimea into an independent country, destined to flourish under the guarantee of the great powers—a war that may make the Danube a free river and the Euxine a free sea; but all this is dependent upon the somewhat humiliating but comparatively pardonable circumstance—that the conduct of Her Majesty’s government has been the consequence of credulity. But let us for a moment contemplate the results of the alternative. If their conduct has been suggested by connivance, you may have a war; but it will be a war carried on by connivance—a timid war—a vacillating war—a war with no results, or rather with the exact results which were originally intended. It will not be a war which will place Russia in that position which we think necessary for the security of Europe and our country; but it will be a war which will end with some transaction similar to Prince Mentschikoff’s note, or to the arrangements of the Vienna conference. Now these are two results so far opposed—so very different and so very opposite—one I believe so welcome to the people of this country, the other so entirely unsatisfactory that I think it is the duty of this House, even if we ‘potter over blue books,’ to try to ascertain the truth of these important facts.”

That remarkable diplomatic epistle, the Vienna note, which every one interpreted in a different fashion, was now to attract his attention. It was impossible for him, continued Mr. Disraeli, not to notice it. “Here,” he cried, “are all the diplomatic wiseacres of Europe assembled at Vienna

in a conference; and they draw up a document which Turkey and Russia both agree in ascribing the same meaning to, and which meaning is the one not intended by any of the ministers or diplomatists of Europe who were engaged in the drawing it up." He attributed its vague language, and the diplomatic action consequent upon its production, not to credulity, but to connivance. The cabinet had agreed that there should be no real struggle for the independence and integrity of Turkey, and they would have been very glad by means of a Vienna note to have obtained their purpose. "What are we to think," asked Mr. Disraeli, "of the discrimination of these statesmen? It is very easy to say that the Vienna note was an unfortunate affair, but it is one of the most important political documents since the treaty of Vienna. Here you have the peace of Europe depending, and you have grave statesmen concentrating their intellect on the question, and they produce a note which they themselves now admit to be the greatest failure on record. But I look upon this matter in another spirit. I cannot believe that some of the ablest and most eminent men in England could have produced such a failure or such a document. But if from the first there was a foregone conclusion in the minds of the cabinet, or a majority of it, that the independence and integrity of Turkey was a farce, and that by a conscientious connivance the affair might be settled by means of this note, then we can account for its production and its failure."

During the interval between the failure of the Vienna note and the crossing of the Danube by Omar Pasha, England had adopted the most depreciatory tone towards Turkey. She was "used up;" she was "a sovereignty full of anomaly, full of misery, and full of perplexity;" she was "a pariah in the family of nations." Suddenly this tone of disparagement ceased. "Now," inquired Mr. Disraeli, always a believer in the vitality and heroism of the Ottoman, "what was it that changed the aspect and

fortunes of Turkey? What was it that gave a new impulse to the cabinet? It was not diplomacy, not the Vienna note, not instructions to ambassadors, depreciating the energy of the land they affected to save—not that accumulated mass of trifling, or worse than trifling, which we have upon our table; no, it was the energy of the Turks themselves—the valour and patriotic spirit of the people, whom the honourable member for the West Riding (Mr. Cobden) reviles—the energy, the patriotism, and the enthusiastic vigour of a 'sovereignty full of anomaly, full of misery, and full of perplexity,' which Europe witnessed and admired, and which, among all classes in England, met with a prompt and generous sympathy. The Danube was crossed, the battle of Oltenitza was won; Russia, which had been accumulating her menacing forces, was beat back by the very men whom your own minister and ambassador had counselled for months to forfeit their independence, and to let their country fall to the ground. But no sooner had the first flush of this good fortune passed over, and a little reaction occurred—no sooner had there been a lull in the public mind, than the policy of credulity or of connivance was at its dirty work again, and the Turks were told, since they had shown themselves capable of fighting successfully for their country, 'not for God's sake to disturb the peace of Europe. Give over this fighting. Respect the feelings of the emperor of Russia.'"

Then Mr. Disraeli alluded to the vacillating orders given by the government to the men-of-war anchored outside the Bosphorus. "The fleets," he cried indignantly, "were ordered to enter the Black Sea; but when we entered the Black Sea, what did we do? Was that a policy of credulity, or a policy of connivance? When I heard of the return of our squadron to Constantinople, I could not help recalling the words of a great orator when he was addressing an assembly not less illustrious than this, when he said: 'O! Athenians, the men

who administer your affairs are men who know not how to make peace or to make war.' " He concluded by expressing his astonishment that Lord John Russell should have been surprised at the resolution arrived at by the Conservatives, not to oppose the vote for men which the government wished immediately to pass. Mr. Disraeli had always ruled, with a generosity seldom displayed by his rivals, that in seasons of crisis it was the duty of the Opposition not to hamper the actions of the government. Party was to give way to patriotism.

"On Friday night," he said, "the noble lord remarked that I had made a most important observation because I rose with the concurrence, indeed at the request of hon. gentlemen on these benches, to state that we should offer no opposition to the vote for men which the noble lord wished immediately to pass. The noble lord was pleased to say that that was an important declaration. I confess myself that I was rather surprised at the somewhat exaggerated view which the noble lord took of those simple words. For whatever might be our opinion of the conduct of the government in the management of those transactions which have led to this terrible conclusion, I cannot suppose that on these benches there could be any difference of opinion as to the duty which we have to fulfil—to support our sovereign and to maintain the honour of our country. I can assure the noble lord that so long as the opposition benches are filled by those who now occupy them, he will at least encounter men who will not despair under any circumstances of the resources and of the fortunes of their country. The noble lord," quietly remarked Mr. Disraeli, as he delivered one of his keen thrusts which never failed to wound, "possesses great historical information, and has great experience of this House. I cannot but believe that the noble lord must have drawn his opinion of those who sit opposite him from his recollection of other and preceding opposi-

tions. I do not know whether on the part of the noble lord it was an impulse of memory or of remorse. But this I can say—for this I can answer on the part of myself and my friends—that no future Wellesley on the banks of the Danube will have to make a bitter record of the efforts of an English Opposition to depreciate his efforts and to ridicule his talents. We shall remember what we believe to be our duty to our country; and however protracted may be the war, however unfortunate may be your counsels, at least we shall never despair of the republic." This pledge was greeted with immense and continued cheering by the Conservatives.

And, now, when the leash which held the dogs of war was on the point of being slipped, when the nation was wrought up to a perfect frenzy of excitement, and when only one subject—the future of the Eastern question—absorbed the minds of all classes, Lord John Russell found himself compelled, as the leader of the Opposition had declared, by all the ties of personal and political honour to fulfil his promise and introduce a scheme to amend the laws relating to the representation of the Commons in parliament. His reform bill was brought in February 13, 1854, but was postponed on March 3, and finally withdrawn on April 11. It proposed to confer the right of voting for both counties and boroughs upon ten pound occupiers, and for boroughs upon six pound occupiers; to create five new special franchises; and to re-arrange certain seats. Mr. Disraeli spoke twice on this occasion—the first time on Lord John's motion for postponement of the second reading, and again on the withdrawal of the measure.

On the motion for postponement Mr. Disraeli said that he was unable to understand the reasons for deferring the bill. The government, he supposed, knew what they were about when they introduced the measure—they knew the state of public business, they knew the state of the country; and why did they now propose to postpone what they had so confidently a few days

ago brought forward? It placed the House in an awkward position. He could not help thinking, looking to the importance of the subject—looking also to the peculiar circumstances in which they found themselves involved—it would have been better if the noble lord, having come to the decision that it was advisable to postpone the measure, had met the House openly at first, and told them that circumstances did not justify him in bringing forward so soon as he intended a measure of parliamentary reform; that he felt himself pledged to introduce a measure of that kind as soon as circumstances admitted it; but that, until he clearly saw he had the power and opportunity of proceeding with the measure, he would not detail to the House the scheme of reform which he meant to introduce. He thought that would have been the wisest and most discreet course for a minister to have taken, because they must remember that reform was a question which had not been hastily taken up by the noble lord and his colleagues. It was now for several years that the noble lord, as minister, or in a position almost as eminent, had been announcing to the House and to the country that he intended to propose a further reform of the House of Commons. The noble lord had the advantage, as first minister, of proposing a measure for the reform of parliament. It was laid on the table; not a single objection was ever made to it by any gentleman who sat on the Conservative side of the House; indeed, no opportunity was ever given to the Opposition of discussing that measure. Thus, a considerable time had now elapsed, and they had on the table another measure of parliamentary reform which had no resemblance to the one introduced two years ago; though the noble lord could not allege that, in consequence of the opposition at that time, or the criticism which it elicited, the measure he now offered was so different in character from its predecessor. Again they were in a position in which there was at least a prospect of the second Reform

Bill of the noble lord not being proceeded with. It was postponed to a distant day. Its projector announced that even he would not pledge himself on that distant day to bring it forward. Its projector might be perfectly justified in the course which he had taken, but in his (Mr. Disraeli's) opinion he ought never to have brought forward the measure in detail if he did not see a fair prospect of advancing it.

The House, he continued, should also consider this point—Was it for the public advantage that a minister of the country should always be laying siege, as it were, to the constitution? It was a very fair thing for a member of the House of Commons, who thought there ought to be great changes in the state, to bring forward his views by way of motion in that House. He generally got defeated by a considerable majority. He renewed his efforts from time to time. If public sympathy was sluggish, his project slept; if circumstances allowed him to bring it forward with more advantage, his project advanced; it might in time be crowned with success. He carried on a constitutional, and not a dangerous agitation. The greatest evil which he had to encounter—the very greatest misfortune he had to experience—was, perhaps, for the House to be counted out, as it once was counted out on parliamentary reform itself. Such a course operated in no manner injurious to the public. But it was a very different thing when a minister announced that he was an agitator against the institutions of the country. The noble lord might be perfectly right in his views on that question, but it was a great disadvantage that a minister of England should be avowedly one who disapproved of the institutions of the country, and did not change them only because he had not the power. Whatever might be the merits of the measure of the noble lord, or of any other measure on the subject which might be introduced by any other minister or gentleman, one great advantage in the constitution was, that it was a thing settled. They lived under a

constitution, of which the essence of its excellency was, that it was something which was established. Now, he wanted to know what had been the position of the House of Commons—of the reformed House of Commons—when for the last four or five years the most eminent man in their assembly, justly possessing the confidence of a great party in the nation, had announced that he disapproved of the character of that institution of the state; that he disapproved of its elements, of the materials of which it was formed; that he thought measures should be passed which should greatly change its character, which should greatly affect its influence—who yet was unable to pass his measures, and nevertheless remained minister of the country.

Look, cried Mr. Disraeli, at the position in which the noble lord had placed the House by introducing his measure in detail, and at the same time not being able to carry it forward. Their supplies had been unanimously voted, and full justice had been rendered to such unanimity. "But, sir," argued Mr. Disraeli, "whatever may be the fortune of this war, we shall not be wise men if we suppose, as in some quarters is flippantly supposed, that it is to be a brief war—that its end is to be accomplished in a moment. It is more prudent to suppose that we are about to embark in a severe, and even a protracted struggle. All men agree that it is wiser to prepare for such a contingency. Well, sir, no ministry, not even a ministry as favoured as those who sit on the bench before me, can suppose that year after year they can proceed with a war of this character always with success, always with enthusiasm on the part of the people, always with ready and generous sympathy on the part of the House of Commons, even on the part of their opponents. There will be moments of gloom, despondency, and discontent. There may be—which God forbid!—there may be disaster. There may be a time when it will be difficult to appeal to the House of Commons for support. You may

not have political parties with the same spirit which now animates them. You may have near divisions on questions of increased or new taxation. The ministry may carry an unpopular tax, or continue an unpopular war, by a very narrow majority; and then, when the people of this country come to look at the majority of twenty, perhaps, which doubles the income tax or reimposes the soap duty, they will say, 'Here are twenty fellows, eighteen of whom ought not to have seats in the House of Commons; here are twelve in Schedule A, there are six in Schedule B; these are the supporters of the government;' the very men whom they have denounced and marked, and branded as persons unworthy of public confidence; and it would be added, 'Yet these are the men who are carrying on war with the Emperor of All the Russias; these are the men who are inflicting colossal imposts on the people of this country.' The weight of such circumstances should alone have made the noble lord hesitate before he introduced his measure in detail, and should certainly make him hesitate before he makes up his mind to relinquish it for ever. In my mind it would be of advantage that the House of Commons should decide upon this scheme. I know the noble lord has already stated that he himself sees no objection to proceeding with a measure of parliamentary reform in a time of war, and of all wars, the one most opportune for parliamentary reform is, according to the noble lord, a Russian war. Those are admissions which have been generously and voluntarily offered to us by the noble lord. I am, therefore, to suppose that the noble lord will find it his duty—difficult as it is to imagine such an event—some day to propose the second reading of this bill."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to discuss the conditions on which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been formed. "What was," he asked, "to use a word which is not English, and is, perhaps, used too often

here—what was the programme of the existing administration? The noble earl, when a little more than a year ago he acceded to office (it is very remarkable, and this is an occasion on which the country should be reminded of it), announced that his government was formed on four great principles—the extension of free trade, which has not been extended; the maintenance of peace, which has become a state of war; the principle of public education, to be secured by the production of a great legislative measure, which great legislative measure we have not had; but this we have received from Her Majesty's government—opposition to the only educational measure which has been introduced into the House; and lastly, and above all, a 'large' measure of parliamentary reform. When that large measure of parliamentary reform may be carried, I pretend not to foresee."

So much, he sneered, for the great principles on which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been founded, and so much for the four large measures that were to be introduced. The reform bill was the last to which the supporters of the government seemed to cling; and they had a right to believe that that was a promise which would be fulfilled, because representations were made to their followers not in slight and ordinary terms, and because expectations were held out to the country not of a trivial character. They were told now that wars and rumours of wars were the sufficient causes for the present government not fulfilling their positive and most important pledge. Yet at the time when war, and even invasion, was deemed to be instant and impending, this promise of reform was repeated, that pledge renewed, and members of the present cabinet even went to the hustings when appointed to office, and at the same time dilated on the terrors of invasion and the blessings of reform. Let them remember, also, that at the time when the present government was constructed, they were told that it was

framed on a principle of enormous personal sacrifice—that men descended to occupy posts inferior to their previous situations, and even inferior to their own opinion of their own talents. They were told then that there were extreme difficulties in bringing together a band of highly-gifted patriots, sacrificing all selfish considerations on the altar of their country—so that the chancellor of the exchequer, for example, and the president of public works (Sir William Molesworth) could meet together in council to consult for the welfare of their country. But a great principle did bring them together—parliamentary reform—so far as the chancellor of the exchequer was concerned, in a Conservative sense, and so far as the president of the board of works was concerned, in a form that would satisfy the disciples of Bentham and of Grote. That was the talisman that bound them all together; that the pervading influence which allowed elements, apparently so discordant, to work in harmony for the advantage of the country. But the spell seemed to have evaporated, though it was the only condition to which they were indebted for enjoying, at that moment, the administrative abilities of the first lord of the admiralty.* At a time when they had two considerable fleets, when they had penetrated the mysteries of the Euxine and were about to break the ice of the Baltic, it was a satisfaction to recollect that, if Lord Aberdeen had not agreed to bring forward a large measure of parliamentary reform—not a wise measure, not a moderate measure, but a "large measure of parliamentary reform"—then, for aught they could see, the energy, the experience which distinguished the right hon. gentleman, the first lord of the admiralty, would not have been enlisted in the service of his sovereign and his country. "Sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "these considerations I offer for the consolation of parliamentary

* Sir James Graham had joined the Coalition ministry on the condition that there should be "a large measure of parliamentary reform."

reformers. I fear they can hardly hope to have their measure, but there has been some magic in the name. Under that standard, at least, those have enlisted who, I have no doubt, will contribute to the greatness of the country and the glory of parliament. They, at least, have been led by that phrase to form a coalition government, and their supporters must be satisfied that, though the 'large measure' which they looked forward to with so much eagerness cannot be passed, still if the phrase had not been circulated, the ministers who have disappointed them would not now be sitting on those benches."

On the withdrawal of the measure the leader of the Opposition spoke at greater length. Lord John Russell, who addressed the House under strong emotion, said that the statement he was about to make might, in some minds, lay himself open to suspicion; but the government had come to the conclusion not to press the measure in the present state of the country. He had pledged his honour to bring forward the measure, and he had felt bound to act according to his engagements. He knew he would lay himself open to the sarcasms of Mr. Disraeli, but he trusted he would meet with support.

In criticising the course the government had pursued, Mr. Disraeli said he thought ministers had arrived at a sound conclusion in that which they had communicated to the House, and that the country was to be congratulated upon their decision. He was not, therefore, disposed to indulge in those sarcasms which the noble lord anticipated on that occasion; and if the conduct of the government with respect to other measures which he might also feel it to be his duty to oppose were influenced by the same feelings and regulated by the same policy, he could promise the noble lord that he would experience from him an opposition as mitigated as he would now. Although he should never shrink from exercising his best efforts to vindicate the opinions

of his friends, and to resist any measures which he thought obnoxious to the public welfare, if such measures were brought forward by the noble lord, he could assure him he was little disposed, after the address he had made, to view with any spirit of acerbity the course he had adopted. Although it had been his fate to be always seated opposite to the noble lord, he could say most sincerely, there was no one in that House who had a more heartfelt respect for the noble lord than he. He thought his character and career were precious possessions of the House of Commons, and he was sure that the members of the House of Commons would always cherish them. Wherever the noble lord sat, he was sure he would be accompanied by the respect of every member of that House; and he thought the manner in which what was evidently a painful communication had been made was in every way worthy of the noble lord's character.

"But," continued Mr. Disraeli, "although I am satisfied with the course which Her Majesty's ministers have proposed to take with respect to this bill for parliamentary reform, and although the feelings which I have endeavoured imperfectly to express with regard to the noble lord are sincere, I still feel it my duty to express my conviction that all that the noble lord has said to-night has not met the real difficulty of his position. All the influences which he has placed before us to-night, and which have induced him to take a course so opposite to that which he originally contemplated, have been in operation during the whole of the session; and, therefore, I am obliged to ask the noble lord how it was that, yielding now to these influences, the noble lord and his colleagues felt themselves justified in bringing forward this bill for parliamentary reform at the commencement of the session?"

"The noble lord has stated, to-night, a variety of causes which have induced him to adopt this final course. Did they not exist when parliament met? Did they

not exist on the 13th of February, when the noble lord in detail, in spite of every warning, notwithstanding every remonstrance, determined to place that measure before parliament and the country? Why, on the very first night we assembled, the noble lord was met from this side of the House by appeals to him not to pursue the course he then contemplated. He was told that the state of war that then virtually existed was one that rendered the period most inopportune for the discussion of a proposal for organic changes in the constitution of the country. The noble lord would not listen to the appeals then made to him. The noble lord, with great ingenuity, maintained by instances and by arguments that a period of war was particularly qualified and adapted for the discussion of such business as this; that, the public mind being distracted from the measure of parliamentary reform, it was possible to devise a measure, without being so much influenced by popular feeling and popular passion as in ordinary circumstances they might be. The noble lord attempted to lay down the principle that the fact of being in a state of war was in favour of this change. The noble lord afterwards showed us that war with Russia was a condition of things peculiarly favourable to the prosecution of a measure of this kind.

"The noble lord has, to-night, observed that there is some force in the remark that there is inconvenience in laying a measure upon the table and not proceeding with it, which brands, I may say, almost a sixth of the members of the House of Commons. In a country like this, where so much depends upon prescription, the noble lord must feel that at any time for a minister of the crown to bring forward a measure that shakes the influence of prescription is a hazardous enterprise. It is certainly one that should not be risked, unless that minister has every prospect of succeeding with his measure, and of substituting for the power or influence which he is going

to destroy or to abrogate that new power or influence which, in his opinion, will more beneficially operate upon the government of the country. Now, what is parliamentary reform? We are in the habit of so familiarly using that phrase that we are almost too apt to forget its exact meaning. After all, a measure for the reconstruction of parliament is a measure to affect and to change the principal depository of power in the state. A measure of parliamentary reform is a measure which virtually says to a large class of the people, 'You do not possess political power—you ought to possess political power—and this is a measure to give you political power.' On the other hand, it says to another class, 'You possess political power—you ought not to possess political power—and we are going to take that political power you hold from you.' These are grave measures. A measure of that kind, if introduced merely by an independent member, may be looked on as a motion brought forward for discussion in a debating society, though the ability of the individual who introduced it, his knowledge of the subject, his depth of reasoning, and eloquence of language, may produce in the long run an amount of public opinion that may support and give influence to his views; but when a measure of parliamentary reform is brought forward by a minister of the great reputation of the noble lord, and when a man is told that he does not possess political power, and ought to possess it, and the measure of the government would give it to him, from that moment that man feels himself as a person aggrieved, as one deprived of his rights, so that you are absolutely producing a disaffected class by the proposition of the government. On the other hand, every man whose franchise is threatened by such a measure, every corporation, every individual who is told that the government are about to deprive him of power that he and those who preceded him have long exercised, though the government do not proceed with the measure, will look upon the government as their enemy

—as persons who, when they have the opportunity, would deprive them of their rights and franchises which they so much value. Therefore, it is clear that when a minister makes a proposition of this nature and does not proceed with it, he is creating disaffection amongst some classes and dislike amongst others. He is, in fact, weakening the constituted authorities of the country, and enfeebling the established institutions of the land. Such I think a most unwise course, and it only proves that no minister should embark in an undertaking of such a nature as parliamentary reform without the necessity for the change being clear, and his ability to accomplish his purpose being evident and palpable.”

Mr. Disraeli then denied that the Conservatives had evinced any opposition to the measure, but that the indisposition to parliamentary reform in the present House of Commons was confined entirely to the noble lord's own side of the House.

“Now, I want to know,” he continued, pressing his arguments home, “what were the circumstances under which the government of Lord Aberdeen made that pledge? What were the circumstances under which the right hon. baronet the first lord of the admiralty made the concession of a large measure of parliamentary reform a condition of his adhesion to the government of Lord Aberdeen? Were they circumstances of less peril than the present? Were they less serious? Was the conjuncture less menacing? Why, we really seem to have forgotten the circumstances under which Lord Aberdeen acceded to power. After an interval of between thirty and forty years, what had the House of Commons just done? They had armed the people; they had absolutely called out the militia, and were training and disciplining 100,000 men. A few months before Lord Aberdeen entered office, the late government had considerably increased the naval estimates; but no sooner had the first lord of the admiralty come into office than he doubled those estimates. Nor had the

present government been four months in office before they formed a project—which they subsequently executed—of having a military camp at Chobham. It was well known that the government then believed that, not merely war, but invasion was imminent.

“Now, no one will pretend that a war with France is not a much more awful affair than a war with Russia; and yet with a war with France in their opinion impending, they formed their government on the principle of a large measure of parliamentary reform. And did the adoption of that statement not serve them? Could they have formed their cabinet unless they had formed the principle upon which that cabinet was established? Could they have carried on their government for six months unless that had been the principle upon which the government of Lord Aberdeen had been established? Could they have possessed, not merely the great administrative abilities of the first lord of the admiralty, but the profound statesmanlike attributes even of the first commissioner of works? Could he have given to the government the fruits of those studies which Bentham had inspired and Grote had guided?

“How did they carry on the administration? Why, only a very few months after its formation we had the financial measures of the chancellor of the exchequer brought forward, which, according to the noble lord's statement to-night, was the excuse for not proceeding with parliamentary reform in the first year that the government held office. A tax extremely odious in the mode in which it is levied was introduced to this House, it being known that there was an absolute majority against the imposition of that tax, and that the most powerful assailants of this tax—the income tax—were to be found on the benches where the supporters of the present government mostly congregated. Did not these gentlemen say that they disapproved of the unmodified income tax, and only voted for it in con-

sequence of this promise of a large measure of parliamentary reform? And, therefore, I say that parliamentary reform was the principle upon which the government was founded, and without it the present cabinet would never have existed, and that without it the administration of affairs could not have been carried on. I say also at the same time, that the pledge to give a large measure of parliamentary reform was made at a time when the state of public affairs, so far as our external relations were concerned, was not less menacing, nay, I think, more perilous and threatening, than it is at the present time."

Opposed to the measure of Lord John Russell, Mr. Disraeli said he was glad that the government had relinquished it. But what was the moral they should draw from all these circumstances? Though no one could question the honour and sincerity of Lord John Russell—still he must say, remarked Mr. Disraeli, that there appeared to him that there had been too much levity, for party purposes, in dealing with questions of organic change in the constitution of the country. He hoped, therefore, that Lord John would not proceed in the course of which he had given an indication, of postponing for a short though indefinite time his plans of parliamentary reform. He thought it would be much better for the noble lord to allow the question altogether to drop, and not to embarrass himself by another pledge.

Instead of embarrassing himself, suggested Mr. Disraeli, by a promise to take as early an opportunity as possible to introduce the measure again, it would have been better for the noble lord to have said, "I have made a considerable attempt. The cabinet have stood by me. This measure is the result of our united deliberations. But the country does not require it, the times are perilous, and although I think that a time of war is no good cause why a measure of parliamentary reform should not be carried if

requisite, still it is not now absolutely necessary; it would involve a great struggle, and, therefore, for the present, I will say farewell to parliamentary reform." "Honourable gentlemen opposite," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "would then have had just as good a chance of getting parliamentary reform when the time arrived as they have now by retaining the vain pledges of a minister. Surely the experience of the last two years must have taught you, that you are not one whit the nearer a measure of parliamentary reform because you have the pledges of statesmen that they will give it to you. Here you have statesmen who have pledged themselves, and who were most sincerely anxious to fulfil their pledges, but you did not obtain your object. You never can obtain a change such as you desire until the great preponderance of public opinion demands it. Well, then, why embarrass the government with a standing pledge of this kind? The noble lord will pardon me for saying that it would have been more statesmanlike if, after all he has done, and I will say, after all he has suffered, he had asked the House to-night to place confidence in his sincerity, and to show by the manner in which they received his words to-night, that they thought his honour was intact; and had then told them that it was much better not to embarrass the government any longer with pledges on this subject, but that they might be confident that when the time was ripe, the measures that were demanded by necessity would be brought forward by any ministry which happened then to be in possession of power. I hope that the noble lord will at least draw this lesson from the past—not to embarrass himself with pledges which he knows not when he can fulfil, merely for party purposes, and in order to animate followers who must feel that, after all, measures of national importance depend upon something more solid than the word of any individual, however sincere or however gifted."

CHAPTER XII.

"A COALITION WAR."

IN the present grave condition of affairs, when at any moment England might be called upon to engage herself in hostilities, the end of which no one could clearly see, it became the duty of the cabinet to make ample provision so that the naval and military resources of the country should be in full readiness for any emergency that might arise. Early in March the budget of the chancellor of the exchequer was laid before the House. Into the details of this financial statement we need not enter, beyond touching upon those proposals which served the purpose of Mr. Disraeli for delivering a scathing attack upon the vacillating and short-sighted conduct of the coalition administration. It was evident to all who had studied the diplomatic negotiations during the past few months, that ministers were divided into two parties upon the question of a war-like policy. Lord Aberdeen represented the section which placed faith in the honour of the Czar, and which did not feel itself called upon to uphold the Ottoman empire by the active interference of English arms. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, represented the ministerial minority which declined to trust the aggressive policy of Russia, which believed in the loyalty and courage of the Turk, and which fully realized the danger to our Eastern possessions by the establishment of the Muscovite power on the shores of the Bosphorus. In the eyes of the leader of the Opposition, to this division of opinion the country was now indebted for her present position. Had England spoken at the outset of the complications between St. Petersburg and Constantinople in no uncertain voice; had the Czar been fully

assured that Lord Aberdeen would declare war rather than give any encouragement to Muscovite designs upon the Porte; had the coalition cabinet been firm, united, and straightforward—Russia would have withdrawn her pretensions, and the necessity for hostilities have been evaded. So thought Mr. Disraeli; and he did not hesitate to give utterance to his opinions.

In the supplemental budget brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, the total extra expenditure was estimated at nearly £7,000,000; this increase the chancellor proposed to meet by doubling the income tax, by adding to the excise duty on Scotch and Irish spirits, by a re-adjustment of the sugar duties, and increasing the malt tax. Exchequer bonds to the amount of £6,000,000 were also to be issued in three series, one for each of the three ensuing years. In criticising these proposals, Mr. Disraeli strongly condemned the financial policy of the past year, which, by reducing the rate of interest upon exchequer bills, and by the conversion of certain "patriarchal stocks," had exhausted the balances in the exchequer to such a degree, that the government had to depend upon deficiency bills for carrying on to a great extent the business of the country. Was that, he asked, a desirable state of things when they were on the eve, he would not say of disaster and distress, but of those contingencies which portended disaster and distress? When the last government quitted office, the balances in the exchequer amounted to nearly £9,000,000; and now, owing to the mistaken views of Mr. Gladstone, instead of enjoying any balance at all, they had an enormous deficiency. "The great balance

has disappeared," said Mr. Disraeli, "because the right hon. gentleman a year ago chose to take a course in monetary affairs which the circumstances of the times did not warrant, and which he followed in opposition to the best authorities who could possibly advise a man—even a man so gifted as the present chancellor of the exchequer." In spite of all warnings, in spite of the efflux of bullion, of falling funds, of over speculation, and, above all, of the agitated state of their relations with Russia, the finance minister had reduced the rate of interest on the unfunded debt; hence an exhausted exchequer and a terrible increase in their system of direct taxation. Such a state of things, argued Mr. Disraeli, must end inevitably in a loan. For the present political and financial condition of the country they had to thank the distractions of a divided cabinet—the one party drifting into war, the other carrying out schemes as if peace were fully assured. On every subject that came up ministers had been divided. They were divided upon the question of parliamentary reform, upon the subject of national education, upon the Protestant cause, and upon fifty other topics. Why, then, asked the speaker, did he not propose a vote of no confidence in the present administration? Such a proceeding would be a useless ceremony. It was unnecessary for him to propose any want of confidence in the present government, for the simple reason that it was apparent and proved to all that ministers had no confidence in each other.

"Let us," said Mr. Disraeli, in conclusion, and launching forth one of the frequent damaging criticisms which were to fall from his lips upon the inconsistencies and incompetence of the coalition cabinet—"Let us look a little to the conduct of these ministers. I shall treat them with fairness. I will not have recourse to little tests, but I will try them by great tests. I try them not upon petty points brought forward for the purpose of a party struggle,

but upon the broad grounds which, as Dr. Johnson said, a jury of people, picked out from the passers-by at Charing Cross, would adopt as tests whether the present government have confidence in themselves. I will take the greatest subject—I will take this question of peace or war. What confidence—what possible confidence—can we have in this cabinet who have involved us in this extraordinary position in which the country now finds itself? Is there a man among them who can tell us what we are going to war about? Is there a man among them who can tell us what at this moment is the object of their counsels? I will not quote a single person except themselves. Why, sir, there is the noble lord the secretary of state for the home department (Lord Palmerston), he has delivered his opinion upon this great subject of Turkish politics. He told us some few months ago, at the end of last session (and it really is almost the only speech we have had with any frankness or spirit upon the subject), he told us why we were going to war, and what we were going to war for. He said, 'We are going to war because we believe the independence and integrity of Turkey are assailed, and because we believe the interests of England are involved in maintaining the independence and integrity of Turkey. We mean by independence and integrity,' said the noble lord, 'we mean facts. It is our opinion that there is as much vitality in Turkey as there is in other countries that are our allies, competitors, or rivals.' The noble lord said more than that. He said, 'Not only do I believe Turkey independent, but I believe it absolutely progressive. Give it a fair trial and its maintenance is easy; and that maintenance is most important for the interests of England, the cause of freedom, and the civilization of the world.' He went on to speak of the high impulses which should induce us to support at this moment the independence and integrity of Turkey. And loud cheers followed the speech of the noble lord.

"Well, what happened a short time after that? There was a right hon. gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) whose conduct I have had occasion to criticise this evening, and whom I little thought when I first rose I should have to notice with regard to another subject; he went about the country and paid a visit to a great commercial community, the city of Manchester, at a time when there was great depression in the country, owing to the state of affairs in Turkey, and when men of resolute minds began to think that that was occurring which might prove fatal to the supremacy of the country, and be most prejudicial to the cause of justice, of truth, and of freedom. What did the right honourable gentleman say on this occasion? Did he agree with the secretary of state? Not at all. He said, 'Things look very bad; but what can you expect? You must prepare yourselves for the worst. The independence and integrity of Turkey which people talk about are not facts—they are phantasies or phantoms. You must not confound the independence and integrity of Turkey with the independence and integrity of other European states.' In fact the right hon. gentleman quibbled completely away the independence and integrity of Turkey, and, in short, seemed to be paving the way for that scheme of partition we have recently heard of. This was the course of proceeding adopted by the minister of finance, who is now going to double the income tax in order to support the independence and integrity of Turkey. I am challenged to propose a vote of no confidence in the government. Why, sir, the noble secretary of state in the other house of parliament (Lord Clarendon) told us the other night what we were going to fight for, and I was grateful to a member of Her Majesty's government for being frank. He said, 'We are going to fight for the rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte. That is our cause. We are resolved, and we shall stipulate that there shall be equality of rights and privileges between the Chris-

tian subjects and all other subjects of the Porte.' I believe loud cheers followed that speech also.

"What happened the next day? The noble lord the secretary of state in this House (Lord Palmerston), who is supposed to have some knowledge of our foreign policy, said, in the most distinct way, and in tones that he knew would re-echo through all Europe, that he did not imagine for a moment that any man would entertain the idea of our obtaining equal privileges for the Christian subjects of the Sultan—that to insist upon such a thing would be acting as badly as the emperor of Russia himself—and that, if we obtained an equality of privileges between the different subjects of the Sultan, we should put an end to the Turkish empire. And yet, whilst those gentlemen have no confidence in their mutual opinions, I am to be taunted and told it is my duty to propose that the House of Commons shall so stultify itself that we are absolutely to vote that we have no confidence in them! But is that all? The noble lord the leader of this House (Lord John Russell) likewise described the war in which we are going to embark. He described the war as a holy war, as a just war, a war for justice, for truth, and for public freedom—and in a manner which I admired, in a most solemn and fitting manner, invoked the name of the Most High upon that war. What happened the next night in another place? Why, the leader of the other house of parliament told us that he thought that war was not yet inevitable, and that in his opinion the war was accursed.

"Sir, if the war in which we are about to engage be a war of justice and truth, and if it be undertaken in support of the liberties of Europe—if it be a war undertaken to check the progress of a colossal despotism and to advance the march of civilization, it is not an accursed war. But if the war be not undertaken for these objects, then the noble lord was not justified in counselling his sovereign to embark in it. Such is your position upon the Turkish question—upon

a question which we are told confidentially alone keeps you together as a ministry. I would like to know how the war is to be carried on with efficiency and success by men who have not settled what the object of the war is. The war has been brought about by two opposite opinions in the cabinet. Those conflicting opinions have led to all the vacillation, all the perplexity, all the fitfulness, all the timidity, and all the occasional violence to which this question has given rise; and I must say, that if the noble lord the leader of this House—I speak my solemn conviction—had remained prime minister of this country, or if the noble lord the secretary of state for the home department had been minister of this country—or if Lord Derby had continued minister of this country—hay, if Lord Aberdeen—I wish to state the case fairly—had been minister of this country, with a sympathizing cabinet, there would have been no war. It is a coalition war. Rival opinions, contrary politics, and discordant systems have produced that vacillation and perplexity, that at last you are going to war with an opponent who does not want to fight, and whom you are unwilling to encounter. What a mess for a great country! and all brought about by such distinguished administrative ability! What is a question about the interest on exchequer bills compared to that! The financial *faux pas* and little escapades of the chancellor of the exchequer would soon have been forgotten, and even forgiven; for after all, what is the failure of his conversion scheme compared to this duplication of the income tax and to this terrible prospect of war, brought about by the combination of geniuses opposite me—and brought about absolutely by the amount of their talents and the discordancy of their opinions? And then they say, if we criticise their policy we are bound immediately to come forward and propose a vote of no confidence in them. I tell them again I will not propose a vote of no confidence in men who prove to me every

hour that they have no confidence in each other." This speech was delivered March 21, 1854.

A few days after this condemnation of the shuffling course pursued by the government, the veiled hostilities which had been some weeks in existence ceased, and war between the allied powers and Russia was openly declared. Late in the month of February, England had despatched an ultimatum to Russia. In this document it was frankly stated by Lord Clarendon to Count Nesselrode, that the British government had exhausted all the efforts of negotiations, and was compelled to announce that "if Russia should decline to restrict within purely diplomatic limits the discussion in which she has for some time past been engaged with the Sublime Porte, and does not by return of the messenger who is the bearer of my present letter, announce her intention of causing the Russian troops under Prince Gortschakoff to commence their march with a view to recross the Pruth, so that the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia shall be completely evacuated on April 30 next, the British government must consider the refusal or the silence of the cabinet of St. Petersburg as equivalent to a declaration of war, and will take its measures accordingly." To this despatch "the Czar did not judge it suitable to give an answer." The Baltic fleet was reviewed at Spithead by the queen amid the wildest enthusiasm; a treaty of alliance was signed at Constantinople between Great Britain, France, and Turkey; and war was declared against Russia, March 27, 1854. The causes of the declaration of war were made known through an official statement published in the *London Gazette*.

"This document," writes a recent historian, "is an interesting and a valuable state paper. It recites with clearness and deliberation the successive steps by which the allied powers had been led to the necessity of an armed intervention in the controversy between Turkey and Russia. It

described, in the first place, the complaint of the emperor of Russia against the Sultan with reference to the claims of the Greek and Latin churches, and the arrangement promoted satisfactorily by Her Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople for rendering justice to the claim, 'an arrangement to which no exception was taken by the Russian government.' Then came the sudden unmasking of the other and quite different claims of Prince Mentschikoff, 'the nature of which in the first instance he endeavoured, as far as possible, to conceal from Her Majesty's ambassador.' These claims, 'thus studiously concealed,' affected not merely, or at all, the privileges of the Greek church at Jerusalem, 'but the position of many millions of Turkish subjects in their relations to their sovereign the Sultan.' The declaration recalled the various attempts that were made by the queen's government in conjunction with the governments of France, Austria, and Prussia, to meet any just demands of the Russian emperor without affecting the dignity and independence of the Sultan, and showed that if the object of Russia had been solely to secure their proper privileges and immunities for the Christian populations of the Ottoman empire, the offers that were made could not have failed to meet that object. Her Majesty's government, therefore, held it as manifest that what Russia was really seeking was, not the happiness of the Christian communities of Turkey, but the right to interfere in the ordinary relations between Turkish subjects and their sovereign. The Sultan refused to consent to this, and declared war in self-defence. Yet the government of Her Majesty did not renounce all hope of restoring peace between the contending parties until advice and remonstrance proving wholly in vain, and Russia continuing to extend her military preparations, Her Majesty felt called upon, 'by regard for an ally, the integrity and independence of whose empire have been recognized as essential to the peace of Europe; by the sympathies of her people

with right against wrong; by a desire to avert from her dominions most injurious consequences, and to save Europe from the preponderance of a power which has violated the faith of treaties and defies the opinion of the civilized world, to take up arms in conjunction with the emperor of the French for the defence of the Sultan.'"

A royal message announced to both houses of parliament the rupture with Russia. "Her Majesty thinks it proper," declared the formal document read by the lord chancellor, "to acquaint the House that the negotiations in which Her Majesty, in concert with her allies, has for some time past been engaged with His Majesty the emperor of All the Russias, have terminated, and that Her Majesty feels bound to afford active assistance to her ally the Sultan against unprovoked aggression.

"Her Majesty has given directions for laying before the House copies of such papers, in addition to those already communicated to parliament, as will afford the fullest information with regard to the subject of these negotiations. It is a consolation to Her Majesty to reflect that no endeavours have been wanting on her part to preserve to her subjects the blessings of peace.

"Her Majesty's just expectations have been disappointed; and Her Majesty relies with confidence on the zeal and devotion of the House of Lords, and on the exertions of her brave and loyal subjects, to support her in her determination to employ the power and resources of the nation for protecting the dominions of the Sultan against the encroachments of Russia."

A grave debate ensued in both Houses when the message was taken into consideration, and Mr. Disraeli again expressed his opinion (March 31, 1854) as to the causes which had led to the Crimean war. He recapitulated several of his former arguments; but having carefully studied the recent papers placed before the House, he was enabled to shed a new light upon the question. He began by alluding to

the constitutional aspect of the message. The power of declaring war was the prerogative of the Crown. He looked upon it as a real prerogative; and if Her Majesty sent a message to parliament, and informed the Houses that the Crown had found it necessary to engage in war, he contended that such a decision was not an occasion when they were to enter into the policy or impolicy of the advice by which the queen had been guided. It was their duty, under such circumstances, to rally round the throne, and to take subsequent and constitutional occasions to question the policy of ministers if it were not a proper one. He vindicated the right of the Opposition, in spite of statements to the contrary from the Treasury bench, not only to support the government when duty commanded such support, but also to question at the same time the prudence of the counsels which had rendered it necessary that all parties in the nation should surround the Crown with their unanimous aid. That state of things had arisen before. Mr. Canning had once been taunted in the same spirit as the Conservatives were now taunted, because they supported a government carrying on a war, of which government they at the same time disapproved. How did Mr. Canning meet the charge? In reply to Mr. Sheridan, he said, "Mr. Sheridan has stated it as a matter of grave imputation against those who, like myself, are ready to vote for every measure of defence and preparation that the minister may think proper to propose, that while we concur in such measures, we do not withhold expressions of distrust and disapprobation of the general conduct and system of the policy of those who propose them. It is urged as if there were something uncandid in not giving confidence to a government at the moment the subject of debate is one on which you agree. Now, sir, I am, on the contrary, of opinion that it would be much more uncandid and unfair to conceal our general sentiments at the moment of our expressing our approbation." Such a state-

ment, added Mr. Disraeli, was a complete vindication, and the best authority for the course the Conservatives had thought proper to adopt on the present occasion. It was their duty to support the throne in vindicating the honour of the country, and in defending the best interests of the empire.

Mr. Disraeli then drew the attention of the House to a document which had been almost entirely ignored by parliament and the press. There had always, he said, existed two theories as to the "Eastern Question," each maintained by statesmen of eminence. The one asserted that there was vitality in Turkey; that she was a country full of resources; and that she was not only qualified for independence, but absolutely capable of progress. "Statesmen of this school," said Mr. Disraeli, "upholding these views, have been of opinion that with wisdom and with firmness Turkey might form a substantial and a real barrier against Russia. Then there is the other school, which believes that there is no vitality in Turkey; that it is decaying and decrepit; that its resources always imperfectly developed, perhaps are now virtually exhausted; and that it is totally impossible that it can long exist as an independent or *quasi*-independent community—and these statesmen, not wishing to hand over this rich prey to its powerful neighbour, have been of opinion that by encouraging the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and by advancing the civilization and increasing the rights of those classes, you might in time prepare a population for Turkey which would prevent that intermediate state of anarchy which otherwise would happen between the fall of a great empire and the rise of a new power."

It was evident, continued the leader of the Opposition, to which school the present chief of the cabinet belonged. In the summer of 1844, when the Czar Nicholas was on a visit to these shores, a memorandum had been drawn up, which was virtually an agreement between Count Nesselrode and Lord Aberdeen, who was then foreign secretary under Sir Robert Peel. In that

memorandum it was proposed to divide Turkey through the agency of Great Britain, Russia, and Austria. France was expressly excluded from that agreement. It was also stipulated that the rights of the Christian subjects of the Porte should be vindicated. And now one of the parties to that agreement occupied the position of prime minister of England! No wonder that the Czar rejoiced to hear of the elevation of Lord Aberdeen, that His Majesty did not believe England would go to war to help the Sultan, and that Russia placed no faith in the alliance with France! No wonder that there were divisions in the cabinet! He did not, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, accuse Russia of immorality in wishing to extend her territories. What nation could throw the stone at her? France had extended her territories by seizing one of the most considerable of the principalities of Turkey, the fair province of Algiers. Could England come into court with clean hands, with her Indian wars, and her recent proceedings in Burmah? And had not the United States only lately absorbed Texas? He made no charges against Russia in that respect. "We oppose the policy of Russia," cried Mr. Disraeli, "because if she succeeds in getting possession of Constantinople, we believe she will exercise such a preponderating influence in European politics as would be fatal to the civilization of Europe, and injurious to the best interests of England."

Yet the hostilities they were about to plunge into might easily have been avoided. Little blame was to be attributed to the Czar for the course he had pursued. Thanks to the Nesselrode memorandum, Russia regarded the present leader of the government as her tool and ally. From recent utterances of certain members of the cabinet, which cast grave reflections upon the position of the emperor of the French, she had been led not to believe in the reality of the union between England and France. Lord John Russell had himself stated to the Czar, in an official despatch,

that it had been prescribed "as a duty, as well as sanctioned by treaty," that the autocrat of All the Russias should guard over the interests of the several millions of Christians in the Ottoman empire. Yet, now the only object England had in going to war was to protect the Christian subjects of the Sultan of Turkey against Muscovite interference! And where pray, asked the Conservative leader, did Lord John discover that wonderful document which prescribed "as a duty," and sanctioned "by treaty," the right of the Czar to meddle with the internal affairs of the Ottoman empire? "Now, if the noble lord," laughed Mr. Disraeli, "will place upon the table a schedule of the treaties which prescribe it as a duty to the emperor, and sanction it as a right that he should protect the Christian subjects of the grand seigneur, I think that would be one of the most instructive diplomatic documents that could possibly now be offered for our consideration." There was no such treaty. There was no plea whatever for the emperor to assume that protection.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by sketching the course the government should have pursued, and condemned in no measured terms the policy of Lord Aberdeen.

"I ask," he sternly inquired, "what is the course the government ought to have adopted when they found so undisguisedly what was the purpose of Russia, and what was the secret agreement which Russia deemed probable of fulfilment? Mark one important fact. The emperor of Russia, when he came to this country in 1844 personally to enter into this secret agreement, based the whole of his future operations upon an estrangement between England and France—the partition was to take place without the interference or interposition of France. Now, in 1844 there was a cordial understanding between England and France, generally throughout the government of the noble lord (Lord John Russell), and entirely through the government of Lord Derby. But was there a cordial understanding

between England and France when Lord Aberdeen acceded to power? Had the emperor of Russia any reason to believe that there was any change in the feelings of this country towards France? A storm of invective was raised against the emperor of the French by the colleagues of the noble earl. No wonder the emperor of Russia was in such extreme haste. No wonder he was so sanguine and so precipitate. No wonder he sent to Sir Hamilton Seymour* immediately there was at the head of the government of this country the individual who had agreed to the ultimate dismemberment of Turkey, who had agreed before the partition that Russia should indirectly govern Turkey, and who was surrounded apparently by colleagues preventing a good understanding with France as much as possible. And then we are told by one of the ministers that the emperor made a mistake, in supposing there was any change of feeling between the two countries. Why, was there not a change of feeling between the two countries? Is it not a fact that there was a considerable change, and have we not since found there was a most fatal alteration in the feelings of the two countries? No one can at this moment calculate the evil, the injury, which the conduct of the colleagues of Lord Aberdeen and himself occasioned with reference to that point?

"Well then, I say, what ought the government to have done when these communications were made? Suppose you had said, as the emperor of Russia said with regard to Prince Mentschikoff's mission, 'We are not to be trifled with. This is no trifling matter. We know the plans have been long matured, devised with great judgment, and ripened with great vigilance. We know the emperor of Russia is not acting from mere caprice, but upon a supposed agreement with this country, of ten years old. He is counting upon an estrangement between England and France; for in conversation with Sir Hamilton

Seymour, he reverts to the point that this is to be carried into effect without the interference or interposition of France. We must lose no time in letting the emperor of Russia know that he is labouring under most serious and awful misconception. We must tell him great changes have taken place since 1844—that no cabinet is bound by what can be considered only as an agreement between gentlemen; and however favourably that may have been received at the moment, great changes have since occurred in the position of Turkey, in the progressive improvement of Turkey, and in the opinions of the people of this country with respect to Turkey. We must tell him it is totally impossible to sanction these plans and prospects of his; that we look upon Turkey as capable of forming an independent barrier to any aggressive power; and though we are anxious to maintain with him a cordial friendship, he must dismiss from his mind for ever those plots and plans which he has nursed with so much sedulousness and so much secrecy.' Was anything of this kind said?" asked the leader of the Opposition. "Ought not the government to have said more? 'Sire, we find you are labouring under a great mistake; you are misconceiving the relations which subsist between England and France. The relations are not dynastic relations. They do not depend in any degree upon the families who occupy thrones; they have been formed by the development of the material interests of the two countries, and the intimate alliance which those interests suggest. We cannot consent to the partition of Turkey. That is out of the question; but if it were absolutely necessary and inevitable to consider the state of that power, the first counsellor we should call in would be France. You are labouring under a great mistake, and you must relieve your mind from all this mis-intelligence.' And do you believe," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that if the emperor of Russia, a prince of great sagacity, shrewdness, and ability, had been met in that way—if you had told him that

* The English ambassador at St. Petersburg.

partition was out of the question; that Turkey was not only to be maintained, but to be permitted to enter into the community of European nations; that France was the cordial friend of England, as you wished Russia also to be—do you believe that we should be at this moment discussing this question, or even in the possession of this painful 'secret and confidential' correspondence? No, sir, the war has been produced by one man. It has been produced by that individual who occupies the most eminent post in this country. And certain I am that as time elapses, and not ere long, that will be the general conviction of all England."

We now for a moment turn from the minarets of Constantinople to the spires of Oxford. Early in March Lord John Russell had introduced a measure "to make further provision for the good government and extension of the University of Oxford and the colleges therein." Of late years the question of university reform had been attracting considerable attention among those interested in the education of the youth of the country. It was complained that the University of Oxford did not at present fulfil the purposes for which it was established, and that some alteration both as to its government and to its system of tuition was absolutely necessary. Then the grievances were catalogued and commented upon. The heads of houses, it was said, were elected for other purposes than to conduct the details of education, and therefore were not specially qualified to undertake the superintendence of the studies of the young men intrusted to their care. Again, it was proposed that the advantages of the college tutorial system and the professorial system should be united, so that the student, in addition to the college tuition, might enjoy the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of modern science and literature and of modern languages, which would be very beneficial to him in after life. The restrictions as to scholarships and fellowships, it was suggested, ought also to be

abolished, and the revenues of the wealthier colleges, which were now not applied to the object of learning or teaching, should be devoted to that purpose. To remove these grievances, Lord John Russell brought in his bill of University Reform, which was at first favourably received. It proposed to change the hebdomadal board into a council, and to alter considerably the constitution of its staff. The preference given by testators to founders' kin and to certain counties was to be done away with, and fellowships were to be held only for one year, unless the holder was engaged in the university in tuition or discipline. A commission was to be appointed to deal with the revenues of colleges, so as to increase the funds for the promotion of education. The question of tests was also to be considered.

Such were the chief objects of this measure, which led to an animated discussion (April 27, 1854) when the bill came into committee. Various members addressed the House, some insisting that as an ancient corporation the freedom of action of the university ought not to be interfered with, whilst others, on the contrary, maintained that the reforms when carried out would help to create a class of learned tutors, would cause the lectures of professors to be well attended, and would be very instrumental in the promotion of learning and religion. Mr. Disraeli spoke with his usual sound common sense upon the meditated alterations, at the same time evincing that strong dislike which always characterized him of anything that interfered with the freedom of the English people. He objected to the bill, not because it attempted to reform and reconstruct an ancient institution of the country, but because it struck a fatal blow at the independence and self-government of the university. If the measure became law it was not the province of the House of Commons to deal with the details discussed by Lord John Russell—those might safely be left to the consideration of the

new controlling body of the university. "Then," said Mr. Disraeli, "if the university ever effects changes—if it deals with the question of increased accommodation for students—if it deals with the question which system of education should be most encouraged by the university—if it deals even with the appropriation of college property—it will be from its own action, with entire independence, with entire freedom, with entire self-government, which, in my opinion, it is of the utmost importance for us to encourage in those great seats of learning whose fortunes are now under our consideration."

Still, even if the bill passed, Mr. Disraeli doubted whether it would accomplish that great change in the system of Oxford which had been so much talked of. One of its objects was to establish a class of distinguished professors; but a professor was not a man that could suddenly be created, even if parliament increased his income to a considerable extent. A comparison had been instituted between the professorial system in English universities and that in the universities of Germany. Yet, between the two systems it was impossible to establish a comparison. "What sphere," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is there for the genius, the intellect, the talent, and the energy of Germany, but in the professorial chair? Give Germany a House of Commons,* and do you think that she would then produce those men of profound erudition, of commanding eloquence—men who can bury themselves in speculative abstractions, and produce those results of erudition which we are told shake the world? The fact is, that in Germany, with a gifted population double the extent of ours, there is no avenue for any man by which he can make the world conscious of his powers, except by the chair of the professor. In this country you may increase the salaries as much as you please, but to

suppose that you can produce a class of men like the German professors is chimerical. . . . We are a nation of action, and you may depend upon it that, however you may increase the rewards of professors—though you may give them £2000 instead of £200—ambition in England will look to public life: men will look to the House of Commons, and not to professors' chairs in the universities. I believe, therefore, that this is another great point in which you will not find any material change effected by what you contemplate with regard to this resolution—this great revival of the professorial system. You will not be able, however you think you may, to lay your hand upon twenty-five or thirty professors suddenly, capable of effecting a great influence on the youth of England. You cannot get these men all at once; it will be slowly, by degrees, with great difficulty, by fostering and cultivating your resources, that you will be able to produce one of these great professors—a man able to influence the public opinion of the university. Whether, then, you look to the great change which you propose with respect to these private halls, which is, in fact, a revolution of the collegiate system; or whether you look to the great alteration you contemplate by the revival of the professorial instead of the tutorial system—on both points you will meet, I think, with disappointment."

Mr. Disraeli further objected to that morbid desire on the part of the legislature to effect changes in the institutions of the country. He specified the legislature, because he did not see that desire for change and innovation on the part of the people. During the last twenty years the legislature had made an assault on the estates of the church, it had introduced the wildest and rawest schemes for the reconstruction of parliament, and now it laid its unhallowed hand on the ark of the universities: yet these morbid attacks had neither been wished for nor supported by the people. And what was the plea urged for these onslaughts?

* Germany has now a House of Commons, and among its most prominent members are the men who formerly filled chairs in her universities.

"The plea is," answered Mr. Disraeli, and in his reply we see the soundness and judicious toleration upon which his Conservatism was based, "that there are anomalies and imperfections that ought to be removed; the fallacy is, that in removing these anomalies and imperfections, we never calculate and we never consider that much greater injury is done to a country like the present by outraging the principle of prescription, upon which our institutions depend, than by removing a few anomalies and imperfections." England was ruled by traditional influences. Without traditional influences they might have a stronger government, but they would have a weaker people. "And, sir," continued Mr. Disraeli, "among these traditional influences the influence of the universities of the country has not been the least considerable. Its direct action has been great; its indirect action has been greater. If I were asked, 'Would you have Oxford with its self-government, freedom, and independence, but yet with its anomalies and imperfections, or would you have the university free from those anomalies and imperfections and under the control of the government?' I would say, 'Give me Oxford free and independent, with its anomalies and imperfections.' Accord authority to the universities if they wished it, by which they might increase their powers and possess an enlarged sphere of action; but place the universities under the control of the state, and one of those influences which in the aggregate formed one of the elements by which they governed the country would be destroyed." In spite, however, of the opposition it encountered, the bill, though with many of its most obnoxious clauses suppressed in committee, was entered upon the statute-book towards the end of the session.*

To return, after this brief interruption,

* By this Act, conjointly with the University Tests Act of 1871, the universities and colleges, with all the offices belonging to them, excepting a very few, were thrown open to all persons, irrespective of religious belief; the government of the universities was transferred to a new body

to the coalition war. As all naval and military preparations were being actively carried out, it became necessary for the chancellor of the exchequer to make demands upon the House of Commons, so that the Treasury should be supplied with the resources necessary for the present emergency. Though Mr. Disraeli had given in his adhesion to the warlike policy of the cabinet, still he did not feel bound to vote for every additional tax that ministers imposed. Consequently there was more than one smart passage of arms during this session between the leader of the Opposition and Mr. Gladstone, whose "sanctimonious rhetoric" was freely indulged in at this period. Mr. Disraeli warmly objected to the increased malt tax, since it pressed not only with great severity upon the land, but was, in his opinion, a most cruel return for the patriotism displayed by the cultivators of the soil. "Though I am willing," he said (May 15, 1854), "to give credit to every class in the country for being ready at this moment to do their duty to their sovereign, yet I ask, without fear of contradiction, is it not the fact, from the nature of circumstances, from the character of the constitution, and from other causes, that you have been obliged particularly to appeal to the patriotism, to the resources, to the exertions, and to the energy of the landed interest of the country? We heard a good deal of declamation some time back against the territorial constitution of the country. I ask any gentleman in what country could you have found those means of defence which you have found in England under the influence and by the immediate aid of the territorial classes of this country? Having raised and armed such a militia, I want to know in what country of Europe, excepting England, you could have found leaders to whom to intrust such a force. You are at every moment, during which

elected by resident graduates; and steps were taken, which have not yet been completed, to apply in the most beneficial directions, for the promotion of popular education of the highest class, the revenues of the universities and colleges.

you are advancing in this struggle, more and more obliged to appeal—this is a necessity from which you cannot escape—to the classes connected with the land, and which are at this moment the surest source of safety and security to England. Whether it be the recruit whom you induced to quit his home, or the cultivator of the soil, whose industry you are obliged to disturb, or the proprietor of the soil—these are the classes to whose exertions, sacrifices, and energy you appeal for organizing the country? Yet you have so managed your finances that the only odious tax which you have put forward is a tax which more or less, and in my opinion in a great degree, does press upon the industry of the soil, which does interfere with the employment of the capital of the cultivators of the soil, and embarrasses, prevents, and restricts the industry on whose resources you mainly rely." Such an imposition, he declared, was as churlish as it was impolitic.

Nor was the leader of the Opposition less sparing of his barbed strictures when dealing with Mr. Gladstone's request to be empowered to issue £2,000,000 of exchequer bonds. Mr. Disraeli considered that demand as the result of the financial errors of the chancellor of the exchequer during the last year. Mr. Gladstone's administration of the national money, he asserted, had been one tissue of mistakes. First, he had dealt incautiously with the exchequer bills; then there had been the unhappy scheme of conversion which bound the country to a stipulated rate for forty years, coupled with the attempt to reduce the national debt on the eve of war; thirdly, he had proposed a peace budget on the eve of war—a peace budget promising repeal of taxes, and securing the assent to the re-enactment of the income tax on the pledge that it should terminate at a fixed time; and then there was the reduction of interest which had forced him to pay for £3,000,000 of exchequer bills. Yet, with war staring him in the face, and with an empty exchequer to cheer him on, Mr. Gladstone was

charmingly self-satisfied, and even had the audacity to sneer at Mr. Pitt for shortsightedness—Mr. Gladstone, who converted stocks and could not foresee the results—Mr. Gladstone, who had one budget in March and another in May, actually sneered at Mr. Pitt as shortsighted! "But if the right hon. gentleman will allow me," said Mr. Disraeli in his most caustic manner, "I trust without offending either himself or his friends, I would presume to give him a piece of advice: I would give over these unworthy sneers levelled at the reputation of a great minister. I would, if I were the right honourable gentleman, confine myself in future to self-glorification, an art of which I admit that the right honourable gentleman is a great master. Let him dilate upon the astuteness with which he effects the conversion of South Sea annuities; let him dwell upon the intrepid courage with which, to show his spite against the party he has quitted, he can double the malt tax; but let him cease from these reflections upon the memory of a statesman who, I can assure him, is still dear to the people of England. Let him remember that Mr. Pitt, whatever may have been his failings, held with a steady hand the helm, when every country but Great Britain was submerged in the storm; and when he taunts Mr. Pitt with courting bankers and money-lenders, he might also remember that that minister owed to a grateful country an eleemosynary tomb."

So vigilant and incisive a critic upon the financial blunders and the tortuous foreign policy of the government, as Mr. Disraeli had now established himself, was not likely to escape abuse when his own shortcomings came up for discussion. It was believed that an opportunity now offered to taunt the leader of the Opposition with inconsistency as to his conduct upon a subject which he had always maintained was specially dear to him. To the malice of his enemies outside the walls of St. Stephen, it was not the custom of Mr. Disraeli to pay the slightest attention.

Venomous and mendacious articles as to his works and speeches were constantly inserted in newspapers and magazines; he never replied to them, he never condescended to contradict them, it is doubtful whether he even troubled himself to read them. Itinerant orators and lecturers, on the spiteful stump, ranted and brayed against him and his policy; yet their asinine echoes, when they even reached his ears, made not the faintest impression upon his mind. He knew so well what it all signified. Statesmen can seldom judge human nature kindly when they so frequently have to observe it either vindictive or suppliant, according as promise or refusal attends upon its importunities. Mr. Disraeli knew that he had but to grant a pension from the civil list, or to nominate to some inspectorship, or to fill up a vacant living, and he could buy the silence of some of his bitterest foes; by such bribery the men who then abused him to the lowest depths of disparagement would have changed their note and extolled him to the skies as the possessor of every tombstone virtue. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? asks Job. Such abuse and such adulation were rightly considered by Mr. Disraeli as beneath notice and beneath contempt.

Of his reputation in parliament Mr. Disraeli, however, was keenly sensitive. He owed everything to the House of Commons; the House of Commons was, as he said, the jury of his life, and he never permitted any charge against himself to be brought before its members without at once rising to meet it. The accusation he had now to encounter was on the occasion of the parliamentary oaths bill. Early in February Lord John Russell had introduced a measure respecting parliamentary oaths. He begged the House to consider generally the oaths of allegiance, supremacy, and abjuration, and the oath taken by papists, with a view to substituting an oath of a simpler and more intelligible kind. As to the oath of allegiance, he

said there was no objection; but the other oaths of supremacy and abjuration were not in the same category. They had been framed to meet certain dangers which existed no longer, and were now unnecessary. Lord John then read his own oath,* which removed the specific declarations required from all papists, and at the same time did away with those words which had been so fatal to the admission of the Jews, "on the true faith of a Christian." When the bill came on for second reading (May 25, 1854) it met with strong opposition. It was, it was said, an insidious attack upon the established church; it omitted all recognition of the supremacy of the queen; it would weaken the Protestant religion; nay, it would destroy the Christian character of the House of Commons. The measure, cried the Opposition, was an underhand contrivance to favour the Roman Catholics, and to allow the Jews to sneak into parliament.

Mr. Disraeli made a guarded and weighty speech on the occasion. In the bill before them they had, he said, to consider three issues which were in themselves of a different nature. By the omission of certain words at the end of one oath a Jew might be admitted into parliament; by the alteration of another oath the views of the Romanising Protestants were to be advanced; whilst by the change and reconstruction of a third oath the objects of the Roman Catholics them-

* This was the oath:—"I, A. B., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and will defend her to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever which shall be made against her person, crown, or dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, all treasons or traitorous conspiracies which may be formed against her or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support, and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown, which succession by an act intituled 'An act for the further limitation of the crown, and better securing the rights and liberties of the subject,' is and stands limited to the Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover, and the heirs of her body being Protestants, hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of this realm; and I do declare that no foreign prince, prelate, person, state, or potentate, hath or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority or pre-eminence directly or indirectly within this realm. So help me God."

selves were to be promoted. "The noble lord," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "has been taunted in the course of this debate with having undertaken the Jewish claims in consequence of an accidental political connection.* Such a taunt I am sure the noble lord will not hear from me. I know well that the noble lord has, during a long and eminent career, consistently connected his name with the advocacy of the principle of religious liberty, and it was, I am sure, in defence of that principle that he felt it his duty to become the advocate of the Jewish claims to political emancipation. I have myself on many occasions supported—at least by my vote—the noble lord in these efforts; though on the only occasion on which I ever presumed to offer my opinions to the House, I claimed for myself another ground for the course which I took, and another reason for sympathy in the object which both the noble lord and myself wished to attain. I respect the principle of religious liberty, as every gentleman, no doubt, with more or less qualification does who sits in this House; but I cannot say that it was on the ground of the principle of religious liberty that, in obedience to an overwhelming conviction, I felt it my duty to advocate the political emancipation of those of Her Majesty's subjects who prefer the Jewish religion."

Then Mr. Disraeli repeated the arguments he had on a former occasion urged. The human family in general were under the greatest obligations to the Jews; it was because the House of Commons was a Christian assembly that the claim of the Jews to enjoy all civil and political privileges was irresistible; had not the Bible been translated and printed, there would now have been no House of Commons; it was to "the sword of the Lord

and of Gideon" that the liberties of England were indebted; and, as a question of policy, it was wise for England to emancipate the Jews: for no country which had persecuted the Hebrew race had prospered. Nor did he despair, continued Mr. Disraeli, of this question of emancipation. Within the last few years great strides had been made in the movement. The Jewish claims had been received with much more favour than were those of the Roman Catholics. No one could pretend that the present position of the Jews in England was for a moment to be compared with what it was twenty, or even ten years ago. They were infinitely more considered, and the prejudices of which they were the victims had rapidly and considerably diminished. "I think," said he, "that it is no exaggeration to say that there never was a body of men who have been subjected to prejudices and political disqualifications who have in so short a time inclined public opinion to their favour, or made such considerable advances towards the ultimate object which they wished to obtain. Taking—and taking naturally—a deep interest in this question, I have ever felt confident that the course of time and of discussion, and the humanizing influences of literary research and public debate, would bring opinion about in favour of the English Jews, remembering that they belong to a religious country deeply interested in their religious creed; and that between the Jew and the Christian there must be intimate relations of sympathy and pious sentiment."

Therefore, feeling convinced that the question was advancing in a legitimate fashion and approaching a satisfactory issue, he regretted the measure now before them. The Jews were a race that could afford to wait. They were not a new people who had just got into notice, and who, if their claims were not recognized, might disappear. "They are," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "an ancient people, a famous people, an enduring people, and a people who in the end have generally attained

* Like Lord John Russell, Baron Rothschild had been returned as one of the members for the city of London. It was unjustly said that the only reason why Lord John advocated the removal of Jewish disabilities was to obtain the admission of his colleague into parliament. It was for the individual, not for the moral principle, they said, he fought.

their objects. I hope parliament may endure for ever, and sometimes I think it will; but I cannot help remembering that the Jews have outlived Assyrian kings, Egyptian Pharaohs, Roman Cæsars, and Arabian caliphs; and, therefore, I think we need not precipitate their claims to their ultimate prejudice and against public feeling, but that we may freely leave them to their own course, sure that argument and fair discussion will facilitate and accomplish them." He lamented the manner in which Jewish claims were mixed up with other interests in the measure they were now discussing. It was a bill in which the word "Jew" never once appeared. "Why has the noble lord," asked Mr. Disraeli, "prejudiced the Jewish claims which, though objected to, were only objected to by a minority, and which were objected to on single and simple grounds which we might meet by argument and master by time? Why, I say, has the noble lord prejudiced those claims by mixing them with subjects that to the people of this country must appear of infinitely greater importance, and which involve us in the consideration of some of the most difficult political problems of the present day? I deeply regret that the noble lord has taken that course."

Mr. Disraeli expressed his fears that additional odium would be created against the Jews by their cause being associated with this matter of the oaths, and by their introduction into the House being sought through the omission of the words, "on the true faith of a Christian." Why, he asked, was it necessary to effect the emancipation of the Jews by the omission of those words? It was his opinion that if the emancipation of the Jews had been sought on the broad principle of religious liberty, the case would have been much simplified, and would have been divested of much unnecessary prejudice that had been excited against it. "I hope to see the day arrive," cried Mr. Disraeli, "when by the free will of parliament a Jew

may take his seat in this House, and take it, not by the odious omission of the words 'on the true faith of a Christian' from one general oath, but by the free declaration of a creed of which he ought on every account to be proud."

Then criticising the other clauses of the bill, the leader of the Opposition proceeded to state that he thought the alteration in the oath of supremacy imprudent and unstatesmanlike; whilst the change meditated in the Roman Catholic oath would simply revive those politico-religious discussions which had been already too prevalent in the country. Nor could he approve of any measure which, at a time when the papacy was active and ambitious, and ritualism was sapping the foundations of the established church, would tend to the relinquishing of their Protestant securities. Holding these views, he felt himself constrained to vote against the measure. "The House may believe them to be only phrases of debate," concluded Mr. Disraeli, with that solemnity which, because it was seldom indulged in, was always very impressive, "when I declare that I never took a course which gave me more pain than that which I take on this occasion, and which I feel it my duty to take; but I can assure the House that I never spoke with more sincerity or with so much pain on any subject. Disagreeing on general principles with the noble lord, I might have left the House; I might have said, 'I am in favour of the political emancipation of the Jews, and indirectly this bill may effect that object, and I am justified so far in supporting it; while on the other hand, I think, both for the sake of my Roman Catholic as for my Protestant fellow-subjects, nothing can be more unwise than the general course which the government are taking with respect to oaths;' and as I could not support the bill, I might have absented myself from the House. But I have felt it my duty to be present, and with the kind indulgence of the House, very imperfectly at this late hour to express my general views on the

question. If the noble lord will retrace his steps and go on with a subject which I thought he had near his heart, I shall follow the course which I have uniformly taken, and give the noble lord my earnest support. The noble lord has on previous occasions taunted me with being silent in debate when the question has been before the House; but as my feelings were peculiar on the subject, I had no wish to obtrude them upon the House. I have never been false to the principle involved. Not merely in this House, but by other modes, even at great sacrifices, I have endeavoured to advance that which I believed to be a sacred cause. I trust the House will not set down to egotism these expressions; but as there have been unfair insinuations of attempted influence on my conduct in respect to this subject at various times by those political friends with whom it is my happiness to act, I may be permitted to add that at no time, and under no circumstances, has a single word escaped from any gentleman near me, which would tend to control or influence my conduct in that respect. They knew from the first, and all must have known it who would have condescended to inquire into my opinions, how profound and fervent were my convictions on this great question. They knew that at all sacrifices I would uphold that cause; and though I deeply regret the course which the noble lord has taken—though I believe it to be one in which he will not only increase the difficulty with which the Jews have to contend, but will create in this country, between considerable classes of Her Majesty's subjects, misunderstandings which, at a time like the present, should have certainly been avoided—still it is my conviction, as certain as I am now addressing you, sir, that the time will come when the Jews will receive in this country full and complete emancipation. The noble lord believes they will receive it, because he has confidence in the principle of religious liberty. I, too, sir, respect that principle; but so far as the Jews are con-

cerned, I have faith in that Almighty Being who has never deserted them."

On a division the government was defeated by a majority of four.

A few evenings after this defeat, on the occasion of the withdrawal of the bribery bills, Lord John Russell, irritated at the recent triumph of the Opposition, and still more at the severe sarcasms of Mr. Disraeli upon the government introducing measures and then withdrawing them, taunted the member for Bucks as to the manner in which he voted upon Jewish questions. "The right hon. gentleman," said Lord John, "has repeatedly declared—I have no doubt with great sincerity—his wish to see the Jews in possession of the privileges which are enjoyed by all the other subjects of Her Majesty. He thinks them peculiarly worthy of those privileges—I believe he thinks them more worthy than Protestants or Roman Catholics, or any class of Christians. Still, notwithstanding his great anxiety to see the Jews in possession of those privileges, the right hon. gentleman sometimes stays away and sometimes votes against them; the political convenience of the hour always seems to overcome his attachment to the cause."

To this accusation Mr. Disraeli at once replied (May 29, 1854). "The noble lord," he exclaimed, "said that I pretend to be an assertor of the claims of the Jews to political equality with the other subjects of Her Majesty, and that I made that cause subservient to political schemes; that when occasion suited me I left the House and did not vote; and that when on the occasion I found it convenient to vote against it I did not hesitate to do so. Now I give to that statement an unequivocal and unqualified denial. I deny that I ever absented myself at any period of my life from any division in which the claims of the Jews were concerned. I give the noble lord's statement an unequivocal and unqualified denial. The noble lord is leader of the House of Commons, and he ought not to make lightly

any such statements of any man, and least of all of me with regard to such a subject. He ought to have informed himself better before he made such a statement. Suppose I had got up and said that the noble lord made parliamentary reform a mere political convenience—that when it suited him he made it convenient to quit the House, and did not vote at all on the subject; and then again, when it suited him, he also knew how to give a vote against that principle. I might, and without much ingenuity, make a very colourable case against him on that head; but I should scorn to do it. I am convinced that the noble lord is sincere in the views which he professes on the subject of parliamentary reform, and that, whenever he has voted against any measure of parliamentary reform, he has done so from a sense of duty, convinced that by so doing he was benefiting the cause to which he wished success. But the noble lord can make no colourable case against me. I never on any occasion have quitted this House; I never absented myself from any division in which the claims of the Jews were concerned; and if I voted against his bill the other night, I tell the noble lord that I do not consider that I voted against a bill which could have benefited the Jews, but, on the contrary, that I voted against a bill which, I believe, would have been of greater injury to the Jews than any measure ever brought forward.”

This refutation was not to end the dispute. At a later hour in the evening, Mr. Bernal Osborne—the Mr. Bernal Osborne whose sense of humour was so dominant that he had no objection to turn his past political career into one great joke, for he was now, as secretary to the admiralty, meekly eating dirt under the chief whom he had called “a boa-constrictor,” and whom he had made the butt of his choicest gibes and sneers—it was this consistent and single-minded politician who now rose up to impugn Mr. Disraeli’s accuracy and course of conduct. He thought, remarked the disinterested wag, that the right hon.

gentleman would have done better had he refreshed his mind previous to giving these unequivocal contradictions. What would the House say when they found that the right hon. gentleman, who gave such an unqualified denial to the assertion of Lord John Russell, that on one occasion the right hon. gentleman, notwithstanding his “peculiar and mysterious feelings”* on the subject, voted against the bill for Jewish emancipation? Yet such was the fact. In 1850 there was a motion that the House should pledge itself early in the following session to take into its serious consideration the form of the oath of abjuration as it affected the Jews, with a view to relieve them from the disabilities under which they laboured. “That,” laughed Mr. Osborne, himself a man in whose veins ran Hebrew blood, “was a pretty distinct motion for the right hon. gentleman to vote against—he who complained that the Jews had not a form of oath to themselves—who insisted that Christianity was under such great obligations to the Jews, that they ought to enter parliament in a way peculiar to themselves;” and yet Mr. Disraeli had voted against the measure! On another similar occasion—also in the year 1850—he found that Mr. Disraeli had not entered his vote. Mr. Osborne concluded by advising the right hon. gentleman in future not to hazard such rash denials.

Mr. Disraeli was not slow to meet his antagonist. “I need make no remark,” he said, rising up at once, “on the harangue of the honourable gentleman. All I said was that I never absented myself from the House whenever the question of the emancipation of the Jews was before it. The hon. gentleman has referred to one division in which my name does not appear. It is sufficient for me to say that at the time, owing to a severe indisposition, I was absent for some time from parliament. Of course that was not what the noble lord meant to charge against me. His charge was that I left

* Mr. Disraeli said *peculiar*, not “peculiar and mysterious.”

the House to avoid the vote. With regard to the other point to which the honourable gentleman has alluded, it is impossible for me to rebut the charge without looking back to the motion in question to see what the technical terms of the motion were as distinguished from other motions. I remember that at a morning sitting the question was discussed, and there were some twenty divisions, and I voted I think on every occasion with the noble lord; but there were some cross divisions on particular points, when it is possible I may not have voted with the hon. gentleman the secretary for the admiralty. I remember very well there was a great number of divisions, and there was one resolution moved that Baron Rothschild should now be admitted to take the oaths at the table. To that I objected, and with the noble lord, and with many other hon. members who supported Jewish emancipation, I voted against the motion. I cannot be sure of the particular vote; but of this I am sure, that if the matter be investigated, what I have stated will be found to be substantially correct."

This statement was "substantially correct." To reply to the strictures of a buffoon is perhaps a waste of time, but briefly the facts of the case are as follows:—On the evening of August 5, 1850, the following motion was submitted to the House of Commons: "That the Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild is not entitled to vote in this House, or to sit in the House during any debate, until he shall take the oath of abjuration in the form appointed by law." Upon that motion an amendment was moved. Three divisions took place upon the general question, and the last division was upon the following motion—"That this House will, at the earliest opportunity in the next session of parliament, take into its serious consideration the form of the oath of abjuration, with a view to relieve Her Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion." Against this last motion Mr. Disraeli voted. It was not a motion, be it observed, for the admission of the Jews

into parliament; it was not even a motion relating to the state of Baron Rothschild; but it was a motion pledging the House to a given proceeding in the next session, and to that pledge Mr. Disraeli objected. It was his opinion that no measure should be introduced for the relief of the Jews unless the government felt sure that it would pass. To be defeated upon such a question only stimulated the prejudices of the day, and worked the Jewish cause harm. The Russell cabinet was weak, and it was for that reason that Mr. Disraeli objected to the course taken in this matter by Lord John. There was no hurry; the Jews could wait, and Mr. Disraeli felt assured that their emancipation would soon be effectually secured. Some political topics are like some peculiar fruits: they cannot be forced, they must be left to the natural order of events; and the Jewish question was one of these topics. Mr. Disraeli having once in the House fully given forth his views upon the subject, having constantly in his books referred to the matter, naturally considered that there was no occasion for him to repeat himself again and again. When the question came up he was therefore content to record a silent vote. On the very morning of the day upon which Mr. Osborne accused Mr. Disraeli of being false to the cause he supported, the leader of the Opposition had thus explained his position:—"I have, I may add," he said (August 5, 1850), "when the question before the House has been the removal of the disabilities now in discussion, given the measures for such removal my unhesitating and unvarying support. I have, indeed, been sometimes accused of not accompanying the exercise of my suffrage with an expression of opinion on the subject itself. . . . Sir, if I thought that anything which I could say would have tended to accomplish an object dear to my heart as to my convictions, my vote would not have been a silent one. But inasmuch as I believe that my opinions upon the subject are not shared by one single member on

either side of the House, I thought that it was consistent, both with good sense and good taste, that after having once unequivocally expressed the grounds on which my vote was given, I should have taken refuge in a silence which at least would not offend the opinions or the prejudices of any hon. gentleman on either side. The opinions I then expressed I now retain. They are unchanged; and were it not presumptuous to speak of human opinions as being immutable, I would express my belief that they are unchangeable."

Was it possible for advocacy to be more decided and consistent? If there were one accusation more than another which we should have thought the hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness of human nature would have avoided, it would have been the throwing a doubt upon the sincerity of Mr. Disraeli's devotion to the Hebrew cause. His loyalty to his brethren was so open, so constant, so unselfish, and inspired by such high and noble motives, that it appeared only a hate blind with personal rancour could ever stultify itself by calling it into question. "I know certainly," said Mr. Walpole, whose sensitive and generous disposition would not permit him to remain silent at such a moment, "that no one in this House is more sincere than my right hon. friend in his desire to obtain for the Jews admission to this House and to seats in parliament. I know that in private as well as in public; and though I have been opposed, and unfortunately shall be always, I am afraid, opposed to my right hon. friend on this question, yet I also know, and I feel bound to declare, that if there is one thing more than another for which my right hon. friend is entitled to the respect of both sides of the House, it is for the manly and honourable way in which he has come forward in support of the Jewish race; and I think I might add, that were it not for the manly support which he has given to that question, his position, if he had consulted his own interests, would have been higher—if at least it could have been higher—than the

position which he now occupies. But his friends have not lost confidence in him because he has stood by his principles, though they do not agree with him on that particular point; and they never will withdraw their confidence from him while from honest conviction he pursues his course, though different from theirs, in the same manly and honourable way which he has hitherto done." So ended this "personal explanation," about which so many malicious falsehoods have been circulated.

In nothing was the general incompetence of the coalition cabinet more exhibited than in its conduct of public business. Important measures were introduced, and then postponed; bills were brought in, and then withdrawn; subjects were announced for discussion which were never debated upon; whilst defeat followed defeat when by chance the government attempted to fulfil its promises. Mr. Disraeli, towards the end of May, passed in review the blunders of the session. He considered some explanation due from ministers as to the probable progress of public business. Seven important measures had been introduced to the notice of parliament; of these seven the government had been defeated in three, three they had withdrawn, and upon the seventh they had received considerable, though partial, defeats.* When ministers introduced these important subjects—all measures attacking either the rights of the citizen or the institutions of the country—to the consideration of parliament, did they believe that they had a fair prospect of carrying them through? If they had no such prospect, were they measures which they ought so to have announced and introduced to the notice of members?

"It is of importance," said Mr. Disraeli with quiet sarcasm, "to impress these circumstances on the attention of the House and country, because we must never

* *Defeated*.—Law of Settlement, Scotch Education, and Parliamentary Oaths Bills.

Withdrawn.—Parliamentary Reform, Bribery Prevention, and Civil Service Reform Bills.

Partially defeated.—Oxford University Reform Bill.

forget we enjoy the inestimable fortune of having our affairs administered by men remarkably distinguished for their abilities; by men who have made enormous sacrifices for their country, and for themselves. No man has made greater sacrifices than the noble lord himself (Lord John Russell); for he has thrown over his old friends and colleagues, and connected himself with a coterie of public men who have passed a great part of their lives in depreciating his abilities and running down his eminent career. And if the noble lord had succeeded in the object for which he made these enormous sacrifices, I should understand more clearly than I do at present the position of the noble lord. But at the end of May, to find that out of seven of the most important measures ever proposed to parliament, three have been withdrawn, and three have only brought defeats to the government, I cannot help feeling that the time has come when it is impossible not to consider that we have not received that ample compensation which was held out to us for the break up of parties, for departing from the spirit and genius of our parliamentary constitution; that we have not received that full, adequate, and ample compensation in well-digested and statesmanlike measures which was held out to us; that, in short, when we were told that though the government to be sure was to have no principles, it was to have 'all the talents,' we had a right to expect that the noble lord would at least have done something—that at least he would have achieved something as compensation for this remarkable state of affairs, which has banished from him all his natural colleagues to invisible positions in the House, and left him on that bench surrounded by those who have been decrying his career for the last quarter of a century."

Ministerial incapacity was now to have a brief respite from the criticisms of the Opposition. Parliament was prorogued August 12, 1854; and the Speaker, on behalf of the Commons, in his address to

the throne apologized, owing to the war, for having not been able to consider the various measures submitted to them. "It has been found impossible," he said, "to mature them during the session, as the progress of our legislation has been interrupted by the commencement of a war which, notwithstanding your Majesty's unremitting endeavours to maintain peace, has been forced upon us by the unwarrantable aggression of Russia on the Turkish empire. Deploping most deeply the necessity for such a contest, we recognize the imperative duty of protecting an old and faithful ally from oppression, and of vindicating the rights of nations; and we believe it well becomes the character and honour of this great empire, adhering to the faith of treaties, to frustrate if possible the designs of a monarch whose ambition, if uncontrolled, would endanger the security of every nation in Europe. Entertaining these views, your faithful Commons have cheerfully and without hesitation placed at the disposal of your Majesty whatever supplies have been deemed requisite to carry on this just and unavoidable war—thus enabling your Majesty to send forth fleets and armies complete beyond all former precedent in discipline and equipment. The efforts of your Majesty to strengthen the arms and aid the cause of Turkey have been cordially seconded by the emperor of the French, and the joint forces of England and France—their ancient hostility converted into generous emulation—now threaten the coasts and harbours of Russia, to the most distant extremity of her vast dominions."

The House had certainly been liberal in voting supplies; but as yet the hostile proceedings of the allies had been more negative than positive. What successes had been gained were due almost entirely to the courage and loyalty of the Turks themselves. At Oltenitza the Ottoman had made the Muscovite bite the dust. At Citate the Russians were again defeated. Near Passova the arms of the brilliant Omar Pasha were also crowned with vic-

tory. The Russians had entered upon the siege of Silistria with ardour, but after a few weeks of unsuccessful effort, were compelled to abandon the attempt. At Giurgevo the Turks were once more triumphant. Then came reverses. At Bayazid and at Kurekdere the Russians were victorious; but what future Muscovite triumphs might have been achieved, were now checked by the arrival of the allies. The English troops were commanded by Lord Raglan, who had seen service under the Duke of Wellington, and had lost an arm at Waterloo; whilst the hopes of France were intrusted to Marshal St. Arnaud, a brilliant and dashing soldier of fortune. Up to this moment the Ottoman empire had fought almost single-handed against her foe. The allied Baltic fleets had sailed north, but as yet, with the exception of the capture of the half-fortified Bomarsund, had wrought nothing in favour of the Turk. In the south Odessa had been bombarded, but the attempt of the allies upon Petropaulovski had not been successful. What glory had fallen to the Ottoman arms was due to the skilful generalship of the bold Omar Pasha. But at last the long-expected aid was quickly coming up from the west. The authorities in London and Paris had resolved upon making a descent upon the Crimea. Sebastopol was the great arsenal of Russia, and protected by its formidable fortifications, the Russian Black Sea fleet lay securely sheltered. The destruction of Sebastopol would, therefore, inflict a blow upon the schemes of the Czar from which they could never recover. The fall of Sebastopol signified the ruin of the arsenal, the ruin of the Black Sea fleet, and the ruin of all hopes of bombarding the vulnerable points of Turkey. In the second week of September there landed on the south-western shores of the Crimea 30,000 French, 27,000 English, and 7000 Turks, all eager to meet the enemy and crush his aggressive ambition. And now important events followed each other in quick succession. The arms of the allies were victorious upon the heights of the Alma. Fearful of

the future, Mentschikoff gave orders to sink the Russian fleet in the harbour of Sebastopol. Early in October the siege army encamped before Sebastopol, and the bombardment commenced in downright earnest. Then followed the battle of Balaclava, with its memorable charge of the Light Brigade, and the victory of Inkermann. Half mad with rage and despair, the Czar saw his plans defeated, and that he had roused an enemy which would now tax all his resources to resist.

Yet these victories, owing to the incapacity of the coalition cabinet to conduct a grave European war, were bought at a terrible and needless sacrifice of English life. Cholera broke out, and beneath its devastating influence the ranks of our regiments daily thinned. The hospitals were ill officered, and lacked all the necessary supplies of drugs and nourishing stores. Beneath the strain put upon them the transport and commissariat systems utterly collapsed. Provisions were sent where they were not wanted, and were left rotting; summer clothing arrived in the middle of winter; furs and woollen goods reached their destination when the heat was almost tropical; and nurses generally came to the bedside when the patients had died. Everything, as Mr. Disraeli said, arrived too late. The turn of events had now made it absolutely necessary that the army should winter in the Crimea, and Lord Raglan directed the commissary-general to effect the necessary preparations. At the very outset grave difficulties had to be surmounted. The abandonment of the northern side of the Crimea after the battle of the Alma had forced the allies to content themselves with pitching their tents and huts upon a barren patch of ground, so small and sterile that it was incapable of yielding the soldiers not only food, but even forage and fuel—"things that rarely before," writes Mr. Kinglake, "had been wanting to the victorious invaders of a country in which hay and wood-stores abounded." No other

spot could be selected: for the enemy, owing to their flank marches, had compelled the allies to encamp upon this uninviting locality, or else to abandon the Crimea altogether. Whilst the Russians had their immense flocks of sheep "under the eyes of our outlying sentries, and showed to any observers who chose to put up their field-glasses their stacks of forage piled up in ranks that seemed miles and miles long," the English and French, deprived completely of the resources of the invaded country, were wholly dependent upon supplies brought by sea. The forage for the cattle and the provisions for the men had to be shipped across the stormy waters of the Black Sea from the stores piled up on the shores of the Bosphorus.

And now a series of terrible blunders occurred. The goods required to fill the store-houses on the Bosphorus had to be conveyed straight either from England or France, and it was soon discovered that the pressure thus suddenly put upon the transport service was greater than it could bear, and that our supply of merchant vessels and steamers was inadequate to convey the mass of articles necessary for a winter campaign. Cargoes were left rotting on the quays because there were no ships to carry them to our ill-clad and half-famished soldiery. Tents and blankets, so useful on the bleak heights of the Chersonese, remained still housed on the Bosphorus on account of the lack of transports to ship them to Balaclava. Wanting food, wanting serviceable clothing, wanting proper medical attendance, our men had not only to face the frosts and snows of a Siberian winter, but still to keep to their work in the trenches, and carry on the siege of Sebastopol. Gradually the awful results of this mismanagement began to assert themselves. From time to time reinforcements landed at Balaclava, yet they failed to effect a sustained increase of the number of men under arms; for the new-comers, suddenly subjected to the rigours of a winter campaign, fell sick with distressing rapidity "so that even within a few days

the fresh troops became rather a superadded assemblage of hospital sufferers than an actual accession to strength." After disembarking at Balaclava, the 9th Regiment at once marched up to the camp awaiting it on the Chersonese table-land; but, so we learn from Mr. Kinglake, there the regiment sickened so fast, that after a few days of campaigning, only a small remnant of men fit for duty were left. The Guards had received some strong drafts of recruits sent fresh from England, yet when January came to an end the three battalions, which lately had constituted a splendid brigade, could only muster some 300 men for duty. The main body of the Scots Fusiliers, comprising at the time seven companies, was assembled one day with all its effective strength to greet the return of its colonel; yet the whole force thus turned out to welcome their commander consisted of under one hundred men. "The 63rd Regiment," remarks Mr. Kinglake, "may almost be said to have disappeared."

The sufferings which caused this decimation were indeed of the bitterest character. Our army was not only threatened with reduction, but with virtual extinction. "In proportion to the numbers," writes Mr. Kinglake, "the English army was undergoing at one time a fiercer havoc than that which ravaged London in the days of the great plague; but no awe, like the awe of a city that is silenced by plague, possessed the English camp. The camp, it is true, was quiet, but the silence maintained by our soldiers was the silence of weariness, the silence of men bearing cold and hardships of all kinds with obstinate pride." The courage of our men was indeed, as the Sebastopol committee declared, "unsurpassed in the annals of war." As long as English soldiers could keep themselves out of the sick list they cheerily went their rounds, mounted guard, or worked during those bitter nights in the trenches. A bite at a biscuit, a sip of whisky, and dressed anyhow, provided warmth could be obtained, the men blithely obeyed all orders, and no sounds of murmur

or discontent were heard. The troops imagined that the siege would soon be at an end, and that they would shortly be breaking into Sebastopol. It was in mercy that the future was veiled before them.*

In turning over the fascinating pages of Mr. Kinglake's history, it is the most piteous reading to see how utterly incapable were the transport and commissariat services to make any headway against the difficulties which surrounded them. Funds they had in abundance; but experience proves, comments our historian, that a government, buying things for an army from traders at home, may have, in spite of all their command of money, to wait a long time before the articles required are ready for delivery. Tents for our troops on the

Chersonese were among the most urgent of all their wants, yet it took seven months before the 3000 tents ordered in November had been landed at Balaclava. "If commerce was thus slow in London, the greatest mart in the world," cogently remarks Mr. Kinglake, "much more might it be expected to baffle the commissary-general, when labouring to effect purchases of those supplies—such as horses, bullocks, vegetables, sheep, hay—which he sought from the Levant." Yet another instance, which is, perhaps, the best illustration of the collapse of the transport system that the "winter trouble" affords. The Prince Consort, seeing that our army was likely to winter on the heights before Sebastopol, had resolved to send out to his brother officers of the

* These statements are not in the least exaggerated. I have before me the private diary of an old friend who held a high command during the Crimean war. A few extracts will prove that the miseries the soldiers had to endure were no imaginary grievances. If a general officer was in such a plight, what must have been the condition of the private?

"October 11, 1854.—Had a small sleep after last night's work; then boiled my shirt again. We had no soap, and took to boiling our shirts. I had worn mine twenty-eight days, having never undressed since I landed in the Crimea.

"October 30.—Baggage coming into camp after forty six days' absence, during which time we had no change of dress. We were in rags, and not very clean rags. For forty-six days and nights I never undressed but to wash myself, and as for the old shirt it fell to pieces. The poor men were in filthy rags. Russian knapsacks were cut up and bound round their legs; their feet were swollen, and many were without shoes.

"November 7.—Rambled over battle ground. Hear those piercing cries! Men don't often cry, but now they rend the air with life's last shriek of agony. They are being carried away on mules, their legs and arms and mutilated bodies only hanging together. Here met Sir John Pennefather.

Did you ever hear anything so terrible as the screams of those poor fellows?' he said; 'I am going away to get out of hearing of such misery; they are all about my tent there lying day and night on the wet ground, starving and dying, and screeching in agony.'

"November 13.—It poured rain all night; nothing can be more wretched than the camp and its furniture. Men in the trenches twenty-four hours at a time, soaked to the skin; no change when they come up to their miserable tents, hardly a twig now to be got to boil their bit of salt pork; short of rations, too, for want of transport; everything cheerless, the sick lie down to die in peace in the miry clay, they have no energy left. Thousands might have been saved, but for the red tape! How many more are yet to suffer?

"November 29.—A most frightful day of rain and storm. All the elements of destruction seem to be gathering against us. It is dragging on a miserable existence in miry clay. No fuel, no clothing, no rum, short rations, no communication with Balaclava; cattle starving, so weak and exhausted that they have not power to move under a load. Average less now, sixty-five men a day. I hope it will not soon be double.

"December 12.—Our men are cheerful under privation and hard work such as the English army never before encountered. We are a savage-looking people; very hard up for fuel; not a twig now to be seen for many miles in the distance; the men grub up the roots of the late brushwood to cook their little rations; and I am not ashamed to say that I cut and carried home on my back, a distance of two miles, a bundle of sticks for my own fire, to cook my ration of salt pork.

"December 16.—Rained all last night, and snow this morning; the deep misery and wretched condition of the troops cannot be described.

"December 24.—Rain, sleet, and snow; 1200 men going down on duty wet to the skin. 89th Regiment one week in camp, and have buried fifteen men. The young lads cannot endure the fatigue; they lie down wet on the wet sod, helpless, unattended, and shiver away their young lives in silent sorrow.

"December 25.—No rations for my men. There was no feeling of discontent among these orderly soldiers; they bore everything with most wonderful patience.

"December 30.—Hard firing all night. Men exhausted and dying; 2900 of third division sick to-day. The sick and non-effective in our small army amount to 10,000. Riting cold.

"January 11, 1855.—The 46th Regiment, just two months in camp, have buried 189 men! The sick of my own regiment to-day, 856; brigade ditto, 1220; the army, 14,800!

"Soldiers are sent from the Balaclava Hospital in shiploads, to die at Scutari; hundreds thrown into the Black Sea. They arrive without clothing; a wet blanket covered with vermin, a ragged coat and trousers, with an old forage cap, is the extent of their kit. 1473 were buried from the hospital in January, 1855; their graves were close to the general hospital; dead dogs, horses, and vermin lay all about to increase disease. The floors of the hospital were wet, and would not dry; the whole place undrained, and the men were poisoned with animal matter. From June, '54, to June, '55, the hospitals in the Bosphorus received 43,228 sick and wounded soldiers, of whom 5432 died. Fire and sword contributed but 4161 admissions, and 395 deaths. In November, December, and January, the admissions into hospitals were 11,000, and amongst this multitude there were but twenty-two shirts: Miss Nightingale issued from her private stores 16,000 shirts." And so on.

Grenadier Guards a supply of fur coats. This warm clothing was promptly despatched, yet it did not reach the Grenadiers till the spring of the following year, "when already a warmth as of summer had caused such hot things as furs to be simply objects of loathing to the eye!" And even when goods contrived to reach the harbour of Balaclava, there was the difficulty, it appears, of having them carried up to the camp. "For want of means to land or tranship goods which had reached their destined ports," says Mr. Kinglake, "they too often remained on board during lengthened periods; and, apparently, it now and then happened that a vessel left the port she had reached without having completely discharged her cargo, yet continued to go on plying, so that stores and munitions long moved to and fro on the waters. In one ghastly instance, the body of an Irish officer, despatched for interment at home, was somehow 'mis-laid,' like the Prince Consort's furs, and apparently it must have voyaged, like a troubled spirit, from shore to shore, for the utmost labour of official investigators proved absolutely unable to trace it." As if our troops, shivering in an Arctic cold, torn by hunger and worn by toil, had not enough to test their temper and endurance, a terrible storm, one of the fiercest that had ever visited that district, broke out shortly after winter quarters had been assigned the men. It was an awful tempest of wind, thunder and lightning, heavy rain and blinding snow, which raged both on shore and sea. No fewer than twenty-one of the vessels freighted with munitions and stores for our army were wrecked. On the heights tents were rent to pieces and swept away utterly, with all the things they contained. Horses broke loose and fled wildly in all directions. Waggons were overturned, and the stores of food and forage which had been brought up with so much labour to the camp, and which were so precious, were almost entirely destroyed. The hospital marquees had been the first to fall, and beneath them lay the sick and dying, exposed all at once

to the pitiless blast and the thickening snows. The trenches were quickly flooded, and the men on duty were unable to cook their food, for no camp fires could be lit. More than one brave fellow, we learn, laid himself down on that terrible night, starved and benumbed, to find on the frozen snow his shroud and grave.

Unfortunately, among the vessels wrecked in the Black Sea was the *Prince*, a ship containing everything that was most wanted—warlike stores of every description, surgical instruments, Guernsey frocks, stockings, boots, shoes; in short, all that foresight could devise for the equipment and comfort of the troops. Certainly, during the months of the winter of 1854–55 the endurance of English soldiery was tried more seriously than it had ever been tested since the days of the Walcheren expedition. And yet what made men's hearts fierce with indignation was the fact that in the French camp matters had been differently organized. There the soldier had his rations served out to him with regularity, he was well clothed and stoutly housed, his sanitary condition was keenly looked after, and he lacked for nothing which a soldier required when in face of the enemy. "Why," it was angrily asked in London, "should there be such grave mismanagement in the English camp when France was setting us such a totally different example?" Mr. Kinglake answers the query by attributing the blame to the various war departments which then existed, and which were each independent of the other. To use a homely proverb, it was a case of "too many cooks spoiling the broth." Before her feud with Russia, England possessed the Horse Guards, and in addition a couple of departments which connected themselves with the grave affairs of war by "three quaintly distinctive prepositions." There was the colonial minister, who was also the minister *of* war, or, in other words, the secretary of state *for* war; whilst the head of the War Office was the secretary *at* war. Each of these ministers had his own independent duties to perform; and

as it appeared to be the rule of the department for no colleague to consult his fellow, a great amount of ignorance prevailed, and confusion necessarily arose. When the English nation became informed of the state of her soldiers in the Crimea, and of the unnecessary privations they had been made to endure, a violent outcry against the government was raised. A pamphlet was circulated with the title "Whom shall we Hang?" and, indeed, in the present temper of the country, vindictive measures would have been almost popular.

To soften the public wrath Lord John Russell wished the Duke of Newcastle to be succeeded at the War Department (which had recently been severed from the Colonies) by Lord Palmerston; but the premier declined to throw over a colleague in the absence of charges that had not been proved. At such a crisis the country refused to be deprived of the assistance of the legislature. Parliament re-assembled in the second week of December. "I have called you together," said Her Majesty, addressing the Houses, "at this unusual period of the year in order that by your assistance I may take such measures as will enable me to prosecute the great war in which we are engaged with the utmost vigour and effect. This assistance, I know, will be readily given; for I cannot doubt that you share my conviction of the necessity of sparing no effort to augment my forces now engaged in the Crimea. The exertions they have made and the victories they have obtained are not exceeded in the brightest pages of our history, and have filled me with admiration and gratitude. The hearty and efficient co-operation of the brave troops of my ally the emperor of the French, and the glory acquired in common, cannot fail to cement still more closely the union which happily subsists between the two nations. It is with satisfaction I inform you that, together with the emperor of the French, I have concluded a treaty of alliance with the emperor of Austria, from which I anticipate important advantages to

the common cause. . . . I rely with confidence on your patriotism and public spirit. I feel assured that in the momentous contest in which we are engaged, you will exhibit to the world the example of a united people. Then shall we obtain the respect of other nations, and may trust that by the blessing of God we shall bring the war to a successful termination."

An important debate ensued in both Houses upon the address. Lord Derby, in rising to express the Conservative opinion of the country, severely criticised the course the government had pursued. He touched upon the ministerial shortcomings, not to revert to the past, but to insure attention for the future. At the commencement of a war, he admitted, there must be mistakes and omissions; but his charge against the government was, that from the commencement of hostilities they had lived from hand to mouth, showing a total want of prescience, and providing for each successive emergency after, and not before, it arose. The fatal words, "too late," had adhered to the whole conduct of the war. When war was declared, what did ministers do? They sent out some thousands of men; took great credit to themselves for their unparalleled exertions; and then held their hand, saying we have done all that is necessary. There were no reinforcements, no army of reserve; the 30,000 men were launched forth to depend on their own resources, because the cabinet lacked foresight. Was it possible that such a handful of troops could settle the question of Russian supremacy? The expedition to the Crimea had been decided upon by the government at home in the face of representations made by generals of high distinction "of the insuperable difficulties of an attack upon Sebastopol," and therefore ministers were doubly bound to neglect nothing that could contribute to success; yet no steps were taken to reinforce the troops before the battle of Inkermann. Again, every branch in the service had broken down—the transport, commissariat, and medical branches had

all proved themselves unable to cope with existing circumstances, owing to the incapacity of the home authorities. If they wanted peace, said Lord Derby, they must be prepared for continued action, and to strike decided blows. "Depend upon it," urged his lordship, "knowing as I do the resources of the Russian empire, and knowing the character of the great man who rules it (for he is a great man, although now employing his vast resources for unworthy purposes), you will gain no peace, unless you conquer it. You must obtain, by your arms, such advantages and such a superiority as to force the emperor to submit to your terms of peace; but if you do not achieve some great successes, you may have a prolonged, a sanguinary, and possibly a disastrous war, but an honourable and a successful peace you cannot have."

In the Lower House Mr. Disraeli adopted the same tone. The cabinet had persisted in treating the war, which they now called a "great war," as a trifling affair. With an unanimous parliament, a popular war, unlimited supplies, and the most powerful ally in the world, yet what had they done? "I now ask the House," he said, "for a moment to turn round and consider, not whether there were sufficient nurses or surgeons at Scutari, not what was the number of pots of marmalade which should be sent out towards the support of our starving troops, but I ask the House to consider what have been the results which this ministry with these enormous advantages have obtained." He then reviewed the events of the campaign. The vaunted Baltic fleet—"greater than any Armada that ever figured in the history of our times"—had been despatched "with the blessings and the benison of our most experienced statesman, and had the advantage of being commanded by a true reformer" (Sir Charles Napier). And what had it done? It had destroyed the half finished fortifications of Bomarsund. What was the next act of the drama? "You attack with a force of 20,000 or 30,000

men a fortress probably as strong as Gibraltar, and better provisioned. And under what circumstances did you undertake this enterprise? The secretary of war tells you that their object is to strike at the heart of Russia in the south, and therefore they attacked Sebastopol. . . . But why attack the place at the wrong time and with ineffective means? It may be a question that there should be a campaign in the Crimea: none that there should not be a winter campaign. But you have chosen a winter campaign, and what have been your preparations for it? In November you gave orders to build huts. You have not yet sent out that winter clothing which is adapted to the climate. . . . You have commenced a winter campaign in a country which most of all should be avoided. You have commenced such a campaign—a great blunder, without providing for it—the next great blunder. The huts will arrive in January, and the furs probably will meet the sun in May. These are your preparations?" Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the magnanimity of the French government in consenting to co-operate with ministers who, as in the case of the existing cabinet, had commenced their official career by slandering the entire French nation from the emperor down to the private soldier; at the same time he warned the House, that unless he had evidence to the contrary, he would not believe that there was the smallest probability of Austria being a useful or sincere ally.

Hostile and severe in his criticisms, Mr. Disraeli had no intention of adopting a factious course towards the government. He disapproved of the conduct of the advisers of the crown; but the war was now not a coalition war, but a national war, and he could therefore only employ party tactics by acting injuriously to the general interests of the country. Such a proceeding was foreign to the loyalty and earnestness of his patriotism. In all measures relating to supply, and to the

efficient carrying on of hostilities, he gave the coalition the fullest and most generous support. As a proof of this absence of all ignoble party feeling, he eloquently seconded the motion of Lord John Russell (December 15, 1854), proposing a vote of thanks to the British forces in the East. No one succeeded better than Mr. Disraeli in the delivery of set, formal orations. His after-dinner speeches, his tributes to the memory of distinguished men who had passed into the "eternal silence," the speeches he gave at academy banquets, at the unveiling of statues, and at other similar ceremonies, are among the happiest of his oratorical effusions. He was amusing without flippancy, instructive without boredom, and dignified without pomposity. He said the right thing, and he said it precisely in the right manner. The speech he delivered on this occasion is little known, and will bear being transferred from the pages of Hansard without compression.

"Sir," said the Conservative leader, "there have been occasions in the history of this country when votes similar to these have been proposed to the House, when members have entered into criticisms on the conduct of commanders and the policy of ministers; but I am sure, however much we may venerate parliamentary precedents, that the House must have sympathized with the noble lord (Lord John Russell), when he said that to-night there would be no difference of opinion upon the motion he was about to submit to our notice. The noble lord has treated the theme which he has introduced in a manner so entirely worthy of its interest, that it would be unnecessary and unbecoming in me to enter into any detail of those actions which have recently commanded the admiration of the world. But I feel I am expressing the opinion of all present when I say that this is no common war, that will some day be covered with the mere dust of history. I feel that this is a war which will rank with those great struggles which produce not only historians, but in time

even poets, to celebrate their lasting achievements; like those famous deeds of the Crusades handed down to the wonder and admiration of man, and many of which have been accomplished in the memorable region where these great exploits are occurring. If I may be permitted for a moment to allude to what seems to be a characteristic feature, there is a singular completeness in this the first campaign of the allied armies which has scarcely attracted observation. The campaign opens by the allied troops taking by storm one of the most difficult positions in the world—an almost impregnable position; and it concludes, virtually, two months afterwards, by the same forces defending a similar position from a similar attack by an immense host. Thus we see, both in assault and defence, the same troops exhibiting the same admirable and unequalled qualities. Between these two almost epic events, I ought not to forget that there is a brilliant episode—that fight of Balaclava—that was a feat of chivalry, fiery with consummate courage, and bright with flashing valour; and though I cannot presume, with the authority of the noble lord, to single out the names of great commanders for the applause of the House of Commons, I cannot forget, I cannot refrain from calling to your recollection, that the two commanders on that memorable occasion lately sat among us on these benches, and that they, I am sure, will peculiarly value the sympathy of the colleagues whom they have quitted. Sir, the noble lord has very properly said that it is not for the House to criticise the tactics and strategy of campaigns; but it is open to us to draw some moral conclusions from the great events which are passing around us, and we may at least draw this from the war which has broken out. I think, what has occurred has shown that the arts of peace practised by a free people are not enervating. I think the deeds to which the noble lord has referred, both among the commanders and common soldiers, have shown that education has not a tendency

to diminish, but to refine and raise, the standard of the martial character. In these we may proudly recognize the might and prowess of a free and ancient people, led by their natural and traditionary chiefs. These are all circumstances and conditions which are favourable to our confidence in the progress of civilization, and flattering, I hope, to the consciousness of every Englishman.

"There is one point upon which I could have wished that the noble lord had also touched—I know there were so many subjects that he could not avoid touching that I share the admiration of the House at the completeness with which he seemed to have mastered all his themes; but when the noble lord recalled to our recollection the deeds of admirable valour and of heroic conduct which have been achieved upon the heights of Alma, of Balaclava, and of Inkermann, I could have wished that he had also publicly recognized that the deeds of heroism in this campaign had not been merely confined to the field of battle. We ought to remember the precious lives given to the pestilence of Varna and to the inhospitable shores of the Black Sea; these men, in my opinion, were animated by as heroic a spirit as those who have yielded up their lives amid the flash of artillery and the triumphant sound of trumpets. No, sir, language cannot do justice to the endurance of our troops under the extreme and terrible privations which circumstances have obliged them to endure. The high spirit of an English gentleman might have sustained him under circumstances which he could not have anticipated to encounter; but the same proud patience has been found among the rank and file. And it is these moral qualities that have contributed as much as others apparently more brilliant to those great victories which we are now acknowledging.

"Sir, the noble lord has taken a wise and gracious course in combining with the thanks which he is about to propose to the British army and navy the thanks also of

the House of Commons to the army of our allies. Sir, that alliance which has now for some time prevailed between the two great countries of France and Britain has in peace been productive of advantage; but it is the test to which it has been put by recent circumstances that, in my opinion, will tend more than any other cause to confirm and consolidate that intimate union. That alliance, sir, is one that does not depend upon dynasties nor diplomacy. It is one which has been sanctioned by names to which we all look up with respect or with feelings even of a higher character. The alliance between France and England was inaugurated by the imperial mind of Elizabeth, and sanctioned by the profound sagacity of Cromwell; it exists now not more from feelings of mutual interest than from feelings of mutual respect, and I believe it will be maintained by a noble spirit of emulation.

"Sir, there is still another point upon which, although with hesitation, I will advert for a moment. I am distrustful of my own ability to deal becomingly with a theme on which the noble lord so well touched; but nevertheless I feel that I must refer to it. I was glad to hear from the noble lord that he intends to propose a vote of condolence with the relatives of those who have fallen in this contest. Sir, we have already felt, even in this chamber of public assemblage, how bitter have been the consequences of this war. We cannot throw our eyes over the accustomed benches, where we miss many a gallant and genial face, without feeling our hearts ache, our spirits sadden, and even our eyes moisten. But if that be our feeling here when we miss the long companions of our public lives and labours, what must be the anguish and desolation which now darken so many hearths! Never, sir, has the youthful blood of this country been so profusely lavished as it has been in this contest—never has a greater sacrifice been made, and for ends which more fully sanctify the sacrifice. But we can hardly hope now, in the

greenness of the wound, that even these reflections can serve as a source of solace. Young women who have become widows almost as soon as they had become wives—mothers who have lost not only their sons, but the brethren of those sons—heads of families who have seen abruptly close all their hopes of a hereditary line—these are pangs which even the consciousness of duty performed, which even the lustre of glory won, cannot easily or speedily alleviate and assuage. But let us indulge at least in the hope, in the conviction, that the time will come when the proceedings of this evening may be to such persons a source of consolation—when sorrow for the memory of those that are departed may be mitigated by the recollection that their death is at least associated with imperishable deeds, with a noble cause, and with a nation's gratitude."

During the few days before Christmas that parliament had re-assembled, a measure was introduced which caused a good deal of excitement, and encountered no little opposition. It was the enlistment of foreigners' bill—a measure which proposed to raise a force of foreigners, not exceeding 15,000 in number, to be drilled and trained in England.

To this foreign legion Mr. Disraeli objected. He did not concern himself with the constitutional aspect of the case. Whether it was agreeable to the feelings of the country, that foreign troops should be enlisted, drilled, and disciplined, and that a large dépôt amounting to thousands should be reserved in the country, was a question not for lawyers to decide, but for the nation. He had no objection to see his countrymen—as was now the case—fighting by the side of foreigners who were allies; but he did object to their fighting by the side of mercenaries. He proved, by extracts from the correspondence of the Duke of Wellington, that no dependence could be

placed upon the fidelity of foreign mercenaries whose political sympathies were not engaged, and who were described by the duke as "so addicted to desertion that they were very unfit for our army." The measure would not only be ineffectual, but it was impolitic. The inference drawn by foreigners from this project would be that the recruiting power of England was exhausted. The bill was calculated to paralyse the power of the government, and to depress the spirit of the country. Appeals to the patriotism of the House of Commons had always been generously responded to; why then were the necessary preparations not made in time? They were engaged in a great war; let them at least have confidence in themselves and in their own resources. "I recommend," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "gentlemen to refresh their memory by turning to the pages of Thucydides. I recommend them to read the despatch of Nicias to the Athenian assembly when he says, 'Men of Athens, I know that you do not like to hear the truth; but understand this—you sent me out to be a besieger, but lo! I am besieged!' Now, sir, we know what was the end of the Sicilian expedition. May that Divine Providence that has watched over the sage and the free save us from a similar conclusion! But at least let us do now what the Athenians did even in their proud despair. They sacrificed to the gods, and appealed to the energies of their countrymen. We at a moment, not, I believe, of equal danger, in a situation which I pray may end in triumph, but still a situation of doubt, of terrible anxiety, even of anguish—we bring in a bill in order to enlist foreign mercenaries to vindicate the fortunes of England!"

Though encountering no little opposition, the bill passed by a majority of thirty-eight. The day before Christmas-eve parliament adjourned to January 23, 1855.

CHAPTER XIII.

"PEACE BY NEGOTIATION."

THE Christmas that ensued was one of the dullest and most oppressive of seasons. There was scarcely a family which had not to mourn the loss of some dear relative. Letters and despatches were eagerly awaited, for no wife or sister felt sure that the next post would not bring tidings of the death of him she loved, laid low by Russian bullets or by fever brought on by the inclemency of the weather, and heightened by the privation of the necessaries of life. The winter at home was severe, and men, as they saw themselves surrounded by all the comforts of civilization, could not help thinking sadly of their brethren battling with the Arctic terrors of a Crimean December, and lacking all that was calculated to make such resistance effective. Day after day the newspapers revealed fresh blunders of the government—blunders supported by the testimony of invalided soldiers now safely housed on English soil—which plainly proved, if proof were wanting, how utterly incapable was the administration to deal with the difficulties of a winter campaign. Tents sent out in November had not yet arrived; furs and flannels were still lying packed on the quays awaiting the orders for shipment that were never delivered; stores of all kinds had been despatched to the wrong ports; the medical staff was at its wit's end to attend to the incessant appeals made upon its limited requirements; the hospitals were crowded, and no new shelter was forthcoming; the commissariat system admitted its inability to perform the duties intrusted to it; all was irritating confusion and wasted energy. Meanwhile, the soldiers in the trenches and on the heights before Sebastopol were dying by the score; the

Russian generals, Janvier and Fevrier, had no reason to complain of the manner in which the work of decimation was being carried on. Whilst such terrible events were taking place on the shores of the Black Sea, society at home was not in the mood to trouble itself as to festivities and hospitalities, in which it had no heart. It was more disposed to pray than to play. The churches were crowded, whilst the places of amusement were comparatively deserted.

On the meeting of parliament, the anxiety of the nation was not allowed to pass unheeded. In both Houses notices of motion were announced with the object of criticising the conduct of the government as to its supervision of military details. In the Upper Chamber Lord Lyndhurst moved, "That in the opinion of this House the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken by Her Majesty's government with very inadequate means, and without due caution or sufficient inquiry into the nature and extent of the resistance to be expected from the enemy; and that the neglect and mismanagement of the government in the conduct of the enterprise have led to the most disastrous results." In the Lower House Mr. Roebuck demanded a strict inquiry into the whole administration of the war, and moved, "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that army." Whilst these two motions were hanging over the heads of ministers, an event occurred which ultimately led to the establishment of what Mr. Disraeli called



Engraved by J. C. Smith. From a photograph by William Van

HON. JOHN ALFRED TRENKLE, M.P., Q.C.

a "re-burnished" cabinet. Lord John Russell had long disapproved of the war department being intrusted to the control of the Duke of Newcastle, and he had more than once brought his objections before the attention of the cabinet. His views, however, failed to impress the prime minister with the necessity for change, and the secretary for war still continued in office. Lord John felt that the conduct of the government was to blame, that there were just grounds for the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck, and that under the circumstances he considered it due to his sense of political honour to retire from the administration in which he had occupied so prominent a position. He tendered his resignation, and announced to a full and excited House of Commons the reasons which had induced him to take that course. He frankly admitted that the evils complained of by the Opposition called for parliamentary inquiry. The condition of the army before Sebastopol was most melancholy. The accounts which arrived from that quarter were not only painful, but horrible and heart-rending. "And, sir," continued this candid friend, "I must say that there is something that, with all the official knowledge to which I had access, is to me inexplicable in the state of that army. If you had been told as a reason against the expedition to the Crimea last year that your troops would be seven miles from the sea—seven miles from a secure port, which at that time, in contemplation of the expedition, we hardly hoped to possess, and that at seven miles' distance they should be in want of food, of clothes, and of shelter, to such a degree that they should perish at the rate of from ninety to one hundred a day—I should have considered such a prediction as utterly preposterous, such an objection as fanciful and unjust. But now we are forced to confess the notoriety of that state of circumstances."

He had, he confessed, never been satisfied with the administration of the war departments. Without wishing to throw any

blame upon the Duke of Newcastle, he had desired that to Lord Palmerston should have been intrusted the seals of the war department; but the prime minister had declined to concur in the suggestion. He would have tendered his resignation before this, only he had been dissuaded by Lord Palmerston, and had reluctantly consented to continue a member of the cabinet. But the motion of Mr. Roebuck compelled him to return to his original resolve. He could not now fairly and honestly say, "It is true evils do exist, but such arrangements have been made that all deficiencies and abuses will be immediately remedied." He was not satisfied with the arrangements as to the future. Therefore, he considered he could come to only one conclusion—that as he was unable to give the only answer that would stop inquiry, it was his duty not to remain a member of the government. Accordingly he had placed his resignation in the hands of Lord Aberdeen, which Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to accept.

This move on the part of Lord John Russell did not meet with general approval. It was considered as a desertion of his colleagues at a moment when a high-minded man would have done all in his power to rally round them and strengthen their cause. He might have resigned before, but under no circumstances should he have resigned whilst a vote of censure was pending. It was like a general quitting the staff on the eve of battle. "You will have the appearance," wrote Lord Palmerston to him when informed of Lord John's intention, "of having remained in office, aiding in carrying on a system of which you disapprove until driven out by Roebuck's announced notice; and the government will have the appearance of self-condemnation by flying from a discussion which they dare not face; while as regards the country, the action of the executive will be paralyzed for a time in a critical moment of a great war, with an impending negotiation, and

we shall exhibit to the world a melancholy spectacle of disorganization among our political men at home similar to that which has prevailed among our military men abroad." By most persons the course pursued by Lord John on this occasion was considered scheming and disloyal. It savoured, as Mr. Bentinck put it, amid the cheers of the House, "more of the foresight and adroitness of political scheming, than of the impulses of political patriotism."

This division in the cabinet tended all the more to convince public opinion as to the necessity of the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck. That gentleman had for some time been in failing health, and when he rose to bring his motion before the House of Commons his strength only permitted him to do little more than introduce the subject to his audience. His debility at such a moment was unfortunate, for it was known that he had been assiduously studying all matters connected with the maladministration of the government, and his grasp of facts, coupled with his powers of invective and natural love of adverse criticism, promised an amusing and damaging speech. The little that he said was, however, much to the point. An army unparalleled in numbers and equipments had left our shores, and was now admitted to be in a condition which wrung the hearts of the country. He wished to ask two questions. What was the condition of the army before Sebastopol? How had that condition been brought about? The army had been reduced from 54,000 to 14,000, of whom only 5000 were now fit for duty. They were without food, clothes, shelter, or ammunition. What had become of the missing 40,000? This grave loss, and the miseries the troops had been called upon to endure, were solely due to the incapacity of the government. At Balaclava there were stores sufficient for twice the army, yet owing to blunder after blunder they were unable to be transported seven miles to our famished and half-naked troops. Mr. Roebuck was about to substantiate

his statements when he was seized with weakness, and had to confess, amid the sympathetic cheers of the House, his inability to proceed. He simply moved for a select committee, and then sat down.

The debate that ensued on the motion plainly showed the necessity of the inquiry demanded by Mr. Roebuck. Speaker after speaker rose up to prove how an army three times victorious had been left to be utterly destroyed by those who should have warmly supported it. It was told how men marched against the enemy without shoes, and almost in want of ammunition—how disgraceful was the state of the food doled out to the troops—how pestilential was the condition of the hospitals at Scutari and Constantinople—how frequently the wounded English were indebted to French mules and French ambulances—how limited was the medical staff—and how, throughout the expedition, the soldiers were subject to privations which ordinary skill and prescience could have prevented. "We accuse you," cried Sir Bulwer Lytton, addressing the Treasury bench, "of this—that you entered, not indeed hastily, but with long deliberation, with ample time for forethought if not for preparation, into the most arduous enterprise this generation has witnessed, in the most utter ignorance of the power and resources of the enemy you were to encounter, the nature of the climate you were to brave, of the country you were to enter, and of the supplies which your army should receive."

It was in vain that Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to throw his shield over his colleagues. Defence against such glaring shortcomings was impossible. The member for the University of Oxford contended that the state of the army had been greatly misrepresented. The distress had been much exaggerated. The war department did not deserve the reproaches that had been cast upon it. Mistakes, it was true, had been made, but in the future they would be rectified—more huts, more clothing, more ammunition, more stores of all

kinds had recently been sent out, and the grievances complained of would certainly not arise again. The committee proposed to be appointed would work no useful purpose; it was impossible in principle and impracticable in action, and was merely the handle used for casting a vote of censure on ministers. For its adoption it had no precedent; between the Walcheren inquiry and the Sebastopol inquiry no comparison could be instituted, for the two expeditions were totally dissimilar. He protested against the motion of Mr. Roebuck as useless to the army, unconstitutional in its nature, and dangerous to the honour and the interests of the commons of England.

Mr. Disraeli succeeded Mr. Gladstone, and his speech (January 29, 1855), as was to be expected, was one of the most damaging that the cabinet had to listen to. He began by discussing the question of the similarity between the Crimean war and the Walcheren expedition. Mr. Gladstone had taken the instance of the inquiry into the Walcheren expedition, and had said, "You have urged upon us what is a false resemblance between the present state of affairs and that which existed at the time of the investigation into Walcheren; and I will show you points of difference which you cannot contest." He entirely agreed with the chancellor of the exchequer. There were points of difference between the present case and that of the inquiry into Walcheren. No minister of the crown, in the case of the Walcheren expedition, had come forward, as Lord John Russell had come forward, and said that the state of affairs in his mind demanded inquiry—that, with all the advantages of his official position and of his accumulated parliamentary experience, there was in that state of affairs something inexplicable to him. In the case of Walcheren, instead of the first minister of the crown in that House making such admissions, they had him urging the inexpediency of the course, and telling them that information was not required in many particu-

lars, and that in others it was inexpedient to give it. After all the arguments of the chancellor of the exchequer upon that parallel between the present circumstances and those which attended the inquiry into Walcheren, let them for a moment remember what were the circumstances which they had to consider, and let them take that broad and common sense view of them which the people of this country had for some time adopted.

"You do not deny," said Mr. Disraeli, "that a great army has perished in a distant country to which it has been sent. The chancellor of the exchequer says that the amount of our loss has been misrepresented and exaggerated. He says that it was an army of 54,000 men, or 56,000 men, and that there are 30,000 still bearing arms, and that only 24,000 or 26,000 therefore have perished. Is not that then, I ask, a subject worthy of inquiry? But the chancellor of the exchequer at the same time dilates upon the contradictory accounts which exist upon the subject. Well, then, is there not some ground for inquiry, when it is a question whether 20,000 or 30,000 British troops have disappeared; when the first minister of the crown in this House tells us, with the advantage of his official experience, that the causes of that loss are inexplicable to him, and when the chancellor of the exchequer tells us that the greatest misconceptions and misrepresentations exist upon the subject? I ask you, is not that a fair ground for inquiry into a subject so interesting to the people of this country? But, says the chancellor of the exchequer, still harping upon the instance of Walcheren, would you justify yourselves in the present case by having recourse to means and measures which in that instance might have been justified because the transactions to which they referred were concluded? But the chancellor of the exchequer has misconceived, or has for a moment forgotten, the nature of the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield (Mr. Roebuck). The motion of the hon. and

learned gentleman is not to inquire into the conduct of the war; it is not a motion which requires us to call before us French and English witnesses, the authorities of rival armies, persons connected with different countries, and owning a different allegiance.

"The motion of the hon. and learned gentleman is to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and whether that condition has been occasioned by the maladministration of the government departments connected with the army. Now, that is a simple issue; but I doubt whether it is an issue which can be raised and investigated at the conclusion of the war. Suppose that the present war were to last as long as the late war, could you at the end of twenty years pretend to inquire into the condition of the army 'now' before Sebastopol? It might be a legitimate course to postpone to the conclusion of the struggle the discussion of the principles and policy upon which it had been conducted; but the present question appears to me to be of an instant and urgent character, and which, if ever inquired into, can only be inquired into at this moment. Then the right hon. gentleman dwells upon the inevitable character of an investigation of this kind by parliament into the administration of those in office, and he says that it is a mockery whether before a select committee, or before a committee of the whole House—the investigation is a mockery, because, he says, that carrying the motion for inquiry is clearly a censure upon the government. But that was not the opinion of Sir Samuel Romilly in the debate upon the Walcheren expedition. I quote a name still remembered and respected by the Whig party. Sir Samuel Romilly, meeting an objection of this kind, said, 'If you lay down that doctrine, you may as well lay down the doctrine that a man is condemned because he is put upon his trial.'

"Well, we have now before us the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, to which there appear to be, so far as I can collect the course of the debate, three main

objections. The first objection is that of my hon. friend the member for West Norfolk (Mr. Bentinck) that it is a censure upon the commander of the forces in the Crimea. Now, if I thought that by any ingenuity the language of the motion could be construed into a censure upon the conduct of Lord Raglan, or of any general officer in the Crimea, I should be the last man who would vote for it, or who would in any way sanction it; but I cannot, I confess, in any way apply to it such an interpretation; and I declare, if I had written the motion myself, entertaining those feelings towards Lord Raglan to which I have referred, that I could not have devised language which I should have imagined would be less likely to be supposed to convey the slightest imputation against the noble lord. The motion refers to the condition of the army, to its physical condition in that country. It wishes to inquire how far that condition, which we so much deplore, and which we believe to be so calamitous, has been occasioned by the conduct of any department of the government. How, therefore, can such an interpretation be placed upon it? Nor do I believe that it is one which can, for a moment, be entertained.

"The second objection to this motion is that it is of an unconstitutional and inconvenient character. That I have already sufficiently touched upon in adverting to the instance of Walcheren, which the chancellor of the exchequer has introduced to our notice to-night. I confess I do not think that any inconvenience would occur from any committee of the House of Commons visiting the heights of Sebastopol. We have to consider whether there shall be an inquiry into a specific subject—the condition of the army. Such an inquiry I believe to be perfectly constitutional, and, in my mind, it would not be inconvenient.

"But then, sir, comes the third and main objection to the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, and that is that it conveys, as the chancellor of the exchequer says, a censure upon the govern-

ment, or, as a colleague of his who preceded him stated, it implies a want of confidence in the administration. Now, let us endeavour to understand what is meant by the want of confidence which this motion is said to carry. I think we have a right to ask from the government, who are resisting the motion on the ground that it implies a want of confidence—I think we have a right to ask them this question—In what government does it imply a want of confidence? Does it imply a want of confidence in the administration which existed forty-eight hours ago? But the noble lord, late the first minister of the crown in this House (Lord John Russell), has quitted that government; and he has quitted it with a happy description of the feelings that prevailed among its members, and of the cordiality which animated their councils. I do not think, therefore, that the government will resist this motion on the ground that it is a want of confidence in the cabinet as it existed with the noble lord, the member for the city of London, as a member of it. Well, then, is it a declaration of want of confidence in the cabinet as it now exists? But we are told almost from the Treasury bench that whatever may be the effect of this motion—whether the government win or whether they lose—the event is to be followed by the abdication of all self-confidence on their own part. Do they then object to our voting a want of confidence in an administration which tells us that the moment it is over, whatever may be the result of the motion, they will consider themselves as no longer worthy the confidence of parliament? Well, then, is the objection to this motion that it implies a want of confidence in the government that is to be? That is a question we have a right to ask. Hard has been the fate of the House of Commons of late years. It has often been called upon to vote confidence in men with whose principles it was unacquainted, but it never has yet been called upon to vote confidence when it did not know either the principles

or the men. Well, then, when we are asked to pass a vote of confidence in the government, or to convey censure on the right hon. gentlemen opposite who have addressed us, I have always argued this case as if the present motion were an attack upon an individual member of the cabinet. The whole of this case has been argued by the government as if this were a personal attack upon the minister of war."

Mr. Disraeli then expressed his views as to the conduct of the government in selecting one of their members as deserving of a censure from which the rest were to be exempt. He objected to such a proceeding. He would not support a vote of censure upon the Duke of Newcastle which did not include the misconduct of his colleagues. He declined to be a party to any motion, the object of which was to pick out one member of the cabinet, and make him the scapegoat of a policy for which the whole of his colleagues were equally responsible. "The Duke of Newcastle," continued Mr. Disraeli, with his accustomed chivalrous generosity, "has done nothing for which his colleagues in the first place are not as responsible as himself. He was placed in a new office, with the most laborious duties; and at a period of such crisis and difficulty it peculiarly became the colleagues of the Duke of Newcastle, who must have been well aware of what he was doing, to have sustained him with their counsel and their sympathy. Least of all did it become them, when he was involved in a difficult position, as he is at present, to have quitted him; or, if they remained with him, to have risen in the House of Commons in order to decry his abilities and denounce his administration. I have no personal or political relations with the Duke of Newcastle. I need not remind the House that there are many reasons why that is not a very popular name on this side of the House. The Duke of Newcastle, as a politician, was trained and bred on the Conservative benches; he owed his intro-

duction to, and his success in public life, to this party; and, in our opinion, he conducted himself to this party, at a particular moment, with an acerbity of feeling and an ambiguity of conduct which, in his present forlorn condition, we can well afford to forget. But, sir, I protest against the convenient method which now is brought into a habit, of placing all these disasters upon either the maladministration of an individual or the ill-working of a system. Whatever may be the faults of that system, when worked by able men it has accomplished great things. I shall not enter into that branch of the question at this hour of the night, because I believe that the calamities which we all deplore have not been brought about only, or even principally, by faults of administration, but rather by an erroneous policy, for which certainly the cabinet must have been responsible, and not a solitary minister. I think the designs of the cabinet were hastily conceived. I think they attempted to accomplish them with inadequate means. I think that they were insufficiently advised of the nature of the enterprise in which they had embarked; and that they showed throughout the whole conception and management of their scheme a want of foresight, of firmness, of depth, of energy, and of all those resources which became a ministry who had embarked in an enterprise of such vast importance.

"Why, sir, the right hon. gentleman, the chancellor of the exchequer, has been this very evening referring to the Walcheren expedition. I remember those debates, and I am sure the noble lord the secretary of state opposite (Lord Palmerston) must also remember them. I am only a reader of those debates, but he was a listener. I remember it was pointed out by very able members of this House, that the government of that day were so ignorant that they had endeavoured by a *coup-de-main* to take one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and were surprised to find, when about to accomplish that project, that the

fortress was defended more strongly than they had been led to believe. Substitute Sebastopol for Antwerp, and you have the history of the present expedition. But it was held to be a great misdemeanour on the part of that ministry to have undertaken a scheme which involved the siege of so strong a fortress, without having previously obtained ample and accurate information as to its defences. Why, we now hear from the ministers themselves that they were surprised at the resistance which had been experienced there, and the strength of the place before which our army under their directions have sat down. And then we are told the ill-administration of an individual minister easily accounts for the disastrous consequences which must necessarily result from such a gross want of statesmanlike sagacity."

Mr. Disraeli then criticised the taunts flung at his supporters for the "timidity" of their past opposition. He was not ashamed to say the Conservatives had exhibited a timid opposition to the government. That had not been because they were afraid of the government, or the consequences of their opposition if they undertook it; but because they were timid on account of the unparalleled disasters which they found accumulating over the country. They did so because the country was involved in war; and, whatever might be their opinion as to the impolicy which occasioned that war, they felt it their duty cordially to support the existing government in carrying on the war with vigour and efficiency. And if they now offered no longer a "timid opposition," it was because they found that, notwithstanding the support they gave the government, ministers had so mismanaged affairs that they had broken up from their own incapacity, and had placed the army of England in its perilous and calamitous condition.

He sneered at the boasted unanimity of the cabinet—a cabinet which did not know twenty-four hours before it was made public of the secession of one of its most important

members, and which saw colleague intriguing against colleague! He did not object to the government because it was composed of men who had acted in different parties, and had once been opposed to each other. A coalition cabinet was a compromise, but it was not necessarily a dishonourable compromise. "There is no stain," said Mr. Disraeli, "upon the character or honour of public men, or inconvenience to the public service, in statesmen, however they may have at one time differed, if they feel themselves justified in so doing, acting together in public life. All that the country requires of public men when they do so act together is, that they should *idem sentire de republicâ*—that upon all great questions they should entertain the same views, that in subjects of policy, whether foreign or domestic, they should be animated by the same convictions and the same sympathies. But with regard to the existing government—if it still be an existing government—all have seen that, during their career, it does not appear that upon any great question, whether domestic or external, they have been animated by the same spirit and sympathies. It is to that circumstance that we must attribute the fact that they have been so unsuccessful in carrying their measures, or prosecuting their policy. What has been the theory that seems to have kept together the various elements of the cabinet? The balance of power in the cabinet is the theory which both sides have attempted to support. That this is so, appears from their own admission. The late lord president is breaking up the cabinet, because from the first he anticipated injurious consequences in the conduct of the war from the want of experience and energy of the Duke of Newcastle, and yet he never objected to the office of minister of war being conferred on the Duke of Newcastle, because it gave him the means of saving the balance of power, and introducing as secretary for the colonies a supporter of his side. Thus, in the struggle to preserve the balance of

power, the noble lord was victorious; but he got bolder, and, not satisfied with his success, he invaded the principalities, and attempted to drive out the minister for war also. That expedition has, however, been no more successful than was that of the Russians some few months since, and what are the consequences?

"We are called on," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "to decide upon the motion of the hon. and learned member for Sheffield, which Her Majesty's ministers tell us they consider a vote of want of confidence. Well, sir, that motion is before the House, and we must vote upon it. The vote which I shall give is one which, I believe, will be the vote of the majority of the House. Personally, I care nothing for the consequences, but I feel called upon to decide on an issue which ministers have interpreted into a question of approbation or confidence. I care not by what name it is called, and I must decide according to the opinions I entertain. Sir, I have no confidence whatever in the existing government. I told them a year ago, when taunted for not asking the House of Commons to ratify that opinion of mine, that as they had no confidence in each other, a vote of want of confidence from this side of the House was surplusage. I ask the House of Commons to decide if twelve months have not proved that I was right in that assumption, although its accuracy was then questioned. What confidence has the noble lord, the late president of the council, in the minister for war? What confidence have this variety of ministers in each other's counsels? They stand before us confessedly as men who have not that union of feelings and of sympathy necessary to enable them successfully to conduct public affairs.

"The late president of the council, in scattering some compliments among the colleagues he was quitting, dilated upon the patience and ability with which the secretary of state for foreign affairs had conducted the duties of his department. I am not here to question those valuable

qualities or that patience; but I say that all the patience and all the ability with which the Earl of Clarendon may have administered, are completely lost by scenes like this, and when the ministers of this country have themselves revealed their weakness to foreign courts, all the ability and patience of that statesman cannot make up for the weakness which is known to prevail in the councils of England. Two years ago England was the leading power in Europe, but is there any man in this House who can pretend that she holds that position now? If this be the case—if we are called upon to decide whether the House of Commons has confidence in the ministry, when the debate is commenced by the secession of the most eminent member of the government, when affairs are in a calamitous state, and when we are told by the late lord president that the conduct of the war is intrusted to a minister who he thinks is unequal to the task—I ask the country, I ask this House, I ask the ministers themselves, whether they can complain that a member of the Opposition should give his vote according to the belief which he entertains that the affairs of the country are intrusted to a deplorable administration."

Mr. Disraeli fairly carried the House with him. On a division the ministers found themselves in a minority of 157. The prophecy of the leader of the Opposition had been fulfilled—coalition cabinets were never popular, and their reign had always been brief.

A ministerial interregnum now ensued. In the House of Lords the Earl of Aberdeen formally announced, that in consequence of the vote in the popular chamber, the ministers had resigned their office. His lordship considered the vote in the House of Commons unconstitutional; but at the same time neither he nor his colleagues had the slightest wish to avoid inquiry into their conduct. He thought the accounts from the Crimea had been much exaggerated, and he looked forward to the

future without dismay. He had nothing to reproach himself with in the past, and he dwelt with satisfaction upon the measures he had introduced and had been privileged to carry out. He concluded by assuring his peers that, whatever administration was formed, it should receive from him the support so urgently necessary in the actual crisis for any government, and that he hoped that such government, as soon as the real object of the war should have been attained, would lose no time in realizing the advantages of peace.

On the resignation of the Aberdeen cabinet, there were more than the usual complications as to its successor. Lord Derby was commanded by Her Majesty to form an administration; but his efforts were not attended with success. He offered Lord Palmerston a seat in the cabinet with the leadership of the House of Commons, which Mr. Disraeli had agreed to hand over to his rival; but the invitation was declined. Places in the new administration were also offered to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert; but with a like result. Aware that without extraneous support he could not constitute a ministry, Lord Derby had no alternative, under the circumstances, but to advise Her Majesty to ascertain if she could find a more efficient administration. Lord John Russell was next applied to; but his desertion of his colleagues was too recent to permit him to entertain any hope of success, and after a brief attempt he abandoned the task. Thus the appointment of Lord Palmerston as prime minister became inevitable. "A month ago," he writes to his brother, "if any man had asked me to say what was one of the most improbable events I should have said, my being prime minister. Aberdeen was there, Derby was head of one great party, John Russell of the other, and yet in about ten days' time they all gave way like straws before the wind; and so here am I writing to you from Downing Street as first lord of the treasury." Certain ministerial changes

took place, in order that the Palmerston cabinet should be "re-burnished." Lord John Russell was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the approaching congress at Vienna, to consider the terms of a peace. Lord Panmure, rough and hard, but not deficient in administrative ability, succeeded the Duke of Newcastle as secretary at war; Lord Granville occupied Lord John Russell's former post as president of the council; Lord Carlisle became lord-lieutenant of Ireland; the other places were filled as they had been under the rule of Lord Aberdeen. The one great change was that Lord Palmerston appeared as head of the cabinet in the stead of Lord Aberdeen.

The new prime minister, in explaining to the House of Commons the circumstances which had placed him in the position he then occupied, candidly avowed that one great difficulty stared him in the face. He strongly objected to the committee voted on Mr. Roebuck's motion. He deemed it unconstitutional and inefficient. He hoped that the House would at least consent to suspend its decision. He pledged himself as head of the government to do all in the matter that could be done. They all remembered the old case of that young monarch of England who, in meeting a body of discontented subjects, and finding that they had lost their leader, rode boldly up to them and exclaimed, "You have lost your leader, my friends; I will be your leader." So he, Lord Palmerston, would now say to the House of Commons, if they would agree not to appoint that committee, that the government would be their committee, and do what the House desired. The object of those who voted for the committee was to compel the government to such administrative improvements as would restore vigour to the service. Those improvements he had already introduced. The offices of secretary at war and war secretary of state were to be amalgamated. The Admiralty was about to establish a special board to superintend the transport

service. Three civil commissioners were to be despatched to the Crimea to examine into sanitary matters. The commissariat service was to be improved. The mission of Lord John Russell would also be fraught with important beneficial results. He trusted, therefore, that these reforms would satisfy the House, and supersede the necessity for organizing this select committee.

Mr. Disraeli rose up to express the views of the Opposition as to the request (February 16, 1855). He declined to accede to such demand. Lord Palmerston had given a list of the improvements he intended instituting. Admitting them to be good, what was to be thought of the predecessors of that reconstituted cabinet, who, to the last hour of their existence, denied the necessity of that reform, and opposed all inquiry into abuses now so openly admitted? "Why, sir," cried Mr. Disraeli, "let the House of Commons well consider what they are now asked to do. One of the finest armies that England ever sent forth mysteriously disappears—not by the sword of the enemy, for that we could endure, and could meet again and vanquish; but by means so mysterious, that a most experienced statesman, with all the advantage of a knowledge of the interior secrets of the cabinet, confessed, and announced to this House, that he could not penetrate the cause of or understand that mystery. The House of Commons must recollect that the position in which they were placed was not that of a public calamity having taken place, which suddenly urges and stimulates some independent member from a feeling of patriotism, although, perhaps, not of prudence, to call for inquiry, and to echo the voice of an anxious and agitated nation. No, sir. The first minister of the crown in this House, the man of whom, as a member, irrespective of all party politics, this House is most proud; the man who had previously been prime minister of England for a long period of years; the man whose qualities, whose sagacity, whose wisdom, whose statesmanlike mind have been just

eulogized by the first minister on the Treasury bench: a man of such qualities that, though he had intentionally destroyed his late colleagues, they have already employed him upon an august mission—this eminent person comes down to parliament and tells you that, although as a minister of the crown he cannot, with all the advantages of official experience, penetrate the mystery of the national calamity that has occurred, he yet thinks inquiry ought to be granted, as the plea for it is irresistible. Acting on that intimation, supported by that grave authority, echoing the universal opinion of the people of Great Britain, the House of Commons, not in haste, but after a debate which occupied days, with unusual numbers present, with its members hastening from every part of the country, by a majority almost unprecedented in the records of parliament, declared that an inquiry is the first duty of those, whoever they may be, who may be intrusted with the government of the country—that an inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons is the only mode in which the necessary improvements can be indicated; and then we are told to-night that the House of Commons is to satisfy itself, that this House of Commons, which only ten days ago, under circumstances of such unmistakable conviction, and sanctioned by the high authority of the leader of the House, arrived at this solemn decision, are to recede from the ground which they then so solemnly affirmed, are to inflict a blow on their reputation and their public influence, such as, in my mind, a long period of years will not counteract!"

The mere vote for inquiry, laughed Mr. Disraeli, had already produced a long series of highly valued improvements; what might they, therefore, not obtain from the inquiry itself? He knew what was the course he should take. He should endeavour to support in every way the decision of the House, and what he believed was the strong and wholesome opinion of the country. "I am, for inquiry," he con-

cluded. "I am for parliamentary inquiry into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and into those branches of the administration which should have prevented the present lamentable condition of our troops." The House agreed with him, and resolved upon appointing Mr. Roebuck's committee.

Scarcely had the new ministry—or, as Mr. Disraeli christened it, "the late ministry and their present faithful representatives"—acceded to power when a second split in the cabinet ensued. A few days after his prayer to postpone the Sebastopol committee, Lord Palmerston came down to the House and announced that Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert had resigned their offices. The reasons given by these ex-ministers for the course they had adopted were perfectly sound and straightforward from their point of view. Under the rule of Lord Aberdeen these statesmen had warmly opposed the formation of the Sebastopol committee of inquiry. It was unconstitutional, without precedent, and cast grave reflections upon the administrative capacity of the cabinet. Since his accession to power, Lord Palmerston, in spite of his former opposition, had been induced to give his consent to the establishment of this committee. Therefore, those of his colleagues who disapproved of his proceedings had no other course before them but to send in their resignations. Sir James Graham objected to the committee being a secret one; he called it "a hole-and-corner committee;" he disapproved of many of the names of those who were to serve upon it; and, above all, he demurred to the doctrine that the demand for inquiry was irresistible—it was a most dangerous doctrine. Mr. Sidney Herbert regarded the motion of Mr. Roebuck as a vote of censure upon the government to which he belonged. He had nothing to conceal, and was ready to go before any committee. Still, if the country were determined that there should be a searching inquiry, a select committee was not the

best, most constitutional, or most efficient mode. As a vote of censure the motion was now valueless, and as an inquiry it would be a mere sham. He disapproved of the committee, and if it was resistible he would not be a party to it. Mr. Gladstone followed suit. He considered Lord Palmerston had made a fatal choice when he had permitted himself to give his consent to that committee. The business of the House of Commons was not to govern, but to call to account those who govern. The motion of Mr. Roebuck was without precedent. The committee was nugatory for the true purposes of inquiry; it was unconstitutional; it would lead to nothing but confusion and disturbance, increased disaster, shame at home, and weakness abroad. He had no objection to the conduct of the government departments being inquired into, provided such inquiry did not involve an examination by the House of Commons into the state of the army in the Crimea. The state of the army in the Crimea was not a fit subject for inquiry at the present moment, if that inquiry was to be conducted by a committee of the House. That committee was to be, not a committee of punishment, not a committee of remedy, but simply a committee of government. Such a proceeding was unconstitutional and without precedent. It was his duty to resist and protest against it; and that resistance he now made with great pain, but with a fixed determination which the public interests and his own conscience alike required.

In reply, Lord Palmerston said he should pass no criticism upon the course which his late colleagues had thought it their duty to adopt, as he was persuaded that they had acted upon a sincere and honest conviction. He had himself from the first objected to the committee, and his objection in some degree still remained; but it was impossible not to see that those who had affirmed the motion had acted upon two distinct motives. One party supported the motion because it thought an inquiry should take place, whilst

the other party favoured the motion because it considered it to be a vote of no confidence in the government. He therefore found himself, continued Lord Palmerston, in this position; he could not persuade the House to rescind its vote, nor could he undertake the task of forming an administration upon the chance of the House rescinding its vote, nor would he shrink from his post if it could not be persuaded to do so. An inquiry might doubtless be inconvenient; but there would be greater inconvenience, he thought, in the country presenting the spectacle of a government in abeyance at so critical a moment.

This explanation was commented upon at some length by Mr. Disraeli (February 24, 1855). He wished to know whether there was any government in existence at all. He had hoped to hear that the prime minister had been successful in forming an administration, but as yet that gratifying information had been withheld. Instead of that, the noble lord said, "So long as we possess the confidence of the House and the country, we intend to do our duty to Her Majesty, and to retain our places." But what Mr. Disraeli wanted to know was, who were "we." The moment, indeed, was one of great national peril. The emergency was granted by all. They were ready to extend to a government, with less reference to party feeling than at any other time, a just and generous support. But it did not appear to him to be a severe condition to be made by members of parliament that they should at least be acquainted with the names of Her Majesty's ministers—that they should have the satisfaction of knowing who were the patriots whom they were asked to support in the fulfilment of those onerous duties under circumstances so grave and so trying.

"I am bound to say," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that, in listening to the remarks of the noble lord with regard to his conduct respecting the nomination of this important committee, I find them not satisfactory. I must even say that I find them incoherent.

I did expect from the noble lord, at least, an answer to the argumentative speeches of his late right hon. colleagues. But the noble lord did not do so. I did expect the noble lord would to-night, at least, vindicate the policy which now seems to be the cardinal point of his administration. The noble lord opposed this committee when it was first proposed, and when it was supported by many hon. gentlemen on his own side of the House, and by the great bulk of those in Opposition. He opposed it in language the most strenuous, and in a spirit the most uncompromising. In consequence of the decision of the House of Commons, the government of which the noble lord was a member ceased to exist. It is unnecessary for me to refer to the circumstances which intervened between that vote and the day when the noble lord received the commission of Her Majesty to form an administration, and I make only one remark upon them, because the noble lord has fallen into a great inaccuracy in his reference to particulars with which he certainly ought to have been well acquainted—I allude to Lord Derby's attempts to form a government. Lord Derby never declined, as the noble lord has stated, the exalted duty which was offered to him because he could not form an administration, but he declined it solely because he could not form a strong administration; and, sir, I cannot admit that the noble lord, especially in the position in which he now finds himself, after ten days' experience of his more felicitous enterprise, has any right to pride himself upon his superiority over Lord Derby in that respect.

"But now let us look to the conduct of the noble lord with respect to this committee—his former opposition to it, his present support of it, and his dealings with his colleagues with respect to it. The noble lord, when a member of the late government, strenuously opposed the committee to inquire into the causes which have led to the present condition of our army before Sebastopol, and upon principle too. The

noble lord, since he has been first minister, since he succeeded in forming this strong administration, over which, only a week ago last Friday, he delivered so animated and fervent an eulogium—for it was only last Friday that he congratulated the country on possessing a ministry distinguished alike for administrative ability, political sagacity, and sufficient liberalism—the noble lord, when he was called upon to form this administration, formed it, if upon any principle, upon the principle of opposing this committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol. . . .

"Well," asked Mr. Disraeli, "what did the noble lord do even last Friday night? He again announces to the House that he will resist the committee; and on what ground does he found that resistance? Why, on the ground of its not being constitutional—no paltry ground, no slight ground, but the most powerful and effective objection that could possibly be stated. Now, sir, this does seem to me to be very strange that the noble lord, the first minister of the crown, should within the space of one short—"one little"—week, be prepared to do that which a week ago he deemed unconstitutional. And for what reason, I ask? Simply because he is determined to remain, he says, minister of the crown, as no other person, on his own showing, could form a strong ministry. I imagine there are many persons who could form a ministry as strong, at least, as that of the noble lord. The noble lord votes against the committee—he speaks against it—he absolutely forms his cabinet on the basis of opposing this committee; and, before a week has passed away, we find the noble lord rising in his place, staking the existence of his government on carrying that committee, and not urging one single reason in favour of that committee being appointed, or offering the slightest argument in support of this sudden and extraordinary change in his policy. After having listened for hours to arguments which I think are answerable, to precedents

with which, I think, the noble lord might have grappled, to a discussion which I supposed the leader of the House of Commons would have condescended to meet at least in fair debate, the noble lord changes all his opinions—the opinions which, only a week ago, he himself described as unconstitutional, he accepts; he not only accepts them, but he makes them the basis of his government. And this is the man whose firmness, consistency, and energy are to save the country!

"I do the noble lord injustice. The noble lord did give a reason for granting this committee. The noble lord has found out since last Friday that there is a strong public opinion in the country upon the subject of appointing this committee to inquire into the condition of the army before Sebastopol, and into the causes that have produced that condition. He has found out that there is such an almost irresistible feeling in the country, that no ministry would be justified in opposing it. Why, sir, what a fine observer must the noble lord be of the nation's disposition—what an acute observer must he be of public opinion—how skilfully must he feel the pulse of the public mind, if it is only since last Friday that he has arrived at that conclusion!

"The discontent of the country for months, which resulted in the overwhelming majority which destroyed a government, never induced the noble lord to suppose that a committee like this was a great necessity. Called upon to fulfil the most responsible duties which a man can be called upon to perform—called upon to form a government at a time when one would have thought that if a man could feel deeply or think profoundly he would have felt and thought deeply and profoundly—the noble lord is still unconscious that this committee of inquiry is still a necessity. The noble lord is still so ignorant of the public mind, and unmindful of that of which all are so conscious, that he

forms his government—not in oblivion, not in neglect, not in forgetfulness of that necessity—but absolutely in defiance of it. Administrative ability, of which we once heard so much, we know has vanished; but I thought at least political sagacity remained. Political sagacity was, I supposed, represented by the first minister of the crown; but after the experience of the noble lord's career, and the speech we have heard to-night, my hopes of his triumphant future are less glowing than I, at first, hoped it might have been. I have made these observations with reference to the change of opinion of the noble lord—I cannot say change of argument, for he offered us no reasons. I have not changed my mind with regard to the necessity of appointing this committee; although I have listened with the respect which they deserve to the speeches of the late colleagues of the noble lord—speeches which I certainly expected that the noble lord would have answered.

"It has been said that this is an unconstitutional course on the part of the House of Commons. I hardly care to enter into that question, because it has been very ably discussed; and I do not know that I should have adverted to it to-night, even after listening to the speeches of the right hon. gentlemen opposite, had it not been for an observation of the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford. I have not come down to-night, sir, to enter into any debate upon the expediency or in expediency of granting this committee. I came down to-night by appointment, to hear three statements from three distinguished statesmen, and to listen, if necessary, to the answer, reply, comment, or criticism of the noble lord the first minister of the crown upon these statements. I certainly think the three right hon. gentlemen have taken a constitutional course in making their statements to the House. I am quite sure that the House would have felt greatly offended if they had not given a frank

exposition of their views; and I think it was a great mistake of the noble lord when having, more than a year ago, seceded from the government of Lord Aberdeen, he came back to office without a frank explanation to the House of Commons, and I believe I express the very general feeling of the House upon this subject. None of us have come here to enter into a discussion whether we should have the committee or not. That is a question which has been settled by an overwhelming majority, and I should like to see the minister who will, directly or indirectly, attempt to rescind it. But it is impossible not to notice some of the remarks of the right hon. gentlemen who have addressed us, one of which is brought to my mind by the observations of the right hon. gentleman, the member for the University of Oxford."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the sneer of Mr. Gladstone, that the Conservatives were basing their opposition upon precedents which were not favourable to their cause. He differed from Mr. Gladstone. The precedents in support of the action of the Conservative party were numerous and were convincing. "I do not want, however," said Mr. Disraeli, "to place this question upon precedents, numerous as they are. They are to be found in the time of Charles II., when an examination took place into the war with the Dutch and the conduct of the Duke of York; in the reigns of William III., Queen Anne, George II., George III., and during the Regency. I do not, however, place the question upon precedents. I say that, had there not been a precedent to meet this instance, it was the duty of the House of Commons to frame a precedent; because the circumstances are grave. A fine army disappears, and the chief minister of the crown in this House, and the right hon. gentlemen who have seceded from the government, tell us that, in possession of all the secrets of the cabinet, the causes of this disaster are to them inexplicable. If there had been no precedent, it was the

duty of the House of Commons, I maintain, under such circumstances, to have made a precedent; and, notwithstanding all his refined and sustained argumentation, the right hon. member for the University of Oxford may rely upon it that the people of England, not in moments of passion, but in the calmest periods of their existence, will always feel that with such an unparalleled disaster, inexplicable by the chief statesmen of the day, it was the first duty of their representatives to inquire into the cause of that disaster. 'But,' says the right hon. gentleman, 'leave it to the government. Why do you not leave it to the government? I am for inquiry,' says the right hon. gentleman, 'but not inquiry in this way, not inquiry by a committee of the House of Commons.' I am perfectly ready to admit that you might, under ordinary circumstances, have modes of inquiry more satisfactory than the one that has been proposed; but what does that come to? I admit that, under ordinary circumstances, a government might claim the duty and the privilege of inquiring into mal-administration, and of recommending, and even devising a remedy; but the fact is, that in the present state of affairs the country has no confidence in the government. It is a conviction that no sincere and efficient relief could be afforded by the administration, either the last or the present—I make this as a general, and not as a personal observation—that has made them feel that it was their own House of Commons from which alone they could obtain redress and satisfaction.

"Then the right hon. member for the University of Oxford takes up the list of the committee. He seems to be very familiar with the opinions of all the gentlemen upon it, and he says—and this was almost the most laboured part of his argument—quoting the opinion of a great authority, that nothing can be done effectually unless the individual who is employed is in favour of the task which he is engaged to fulfil. And it was considered by his

friends, certainly, as a very unanswerable argument; but did it not occur to him that it was in effect an argument against the constitution of every parliamentary committee that is called into existence every day upon every subject. Why, there is not a committee upon any subject which does not consist in many of its members of instruments that are not favourable to the subject-matter of inquiry; and, therefore, if the argument of the right hon. gentleman means anything, it is good against the whole system of parliamentary inquiry. Is the right hon. gentleman prepared to go so far as that? We have heard many sneers at parliament. We are told the constitution is in danger, because the noble lord at the head of the administration in the course of one week has changed the whole policy of his cabinet; but certain am I that if you wish to deal a blow against parliamentary authority, you can deal no more effective one than to impress on the country that the elements of a parliamentary committee are not adapted to the adequate fulfilment of their purpose. The noble lord opposite, instead of answering the arguments of his late colleagues respecting this committee, which a week ago he declared was unconstitutional, and on which to-night he has staked the existence of his government, has again favoured us with flattering visions of an impending peace.

"I am quite sure that, if the country believes that peace with honour can be secured by the noble lord, the ministry may count on the earnest support of this House. All I can say is, I hope the instructions which the noble lord has given to the noble lord the member for the City of London (Lord John Russell) are conceived in a more frank spirit, and in more intelligible language than the communications which he had on behalf of Lord Derby with the right hon. gentleman, and the understanding which he arrived at with his late colleagues as to the basis on which his government was formed. If the noble lord has gone to Vienna to be the promoter

of peace with a foregone conclusion in favour of war, that, I think, is not a satisfactory prospect for the country. I can, therefore, only hope that his instructions from the first minister of the crown have been couched in more familiar spirit, and expressed in more intelligible terms, than the conditions which he (Lord Palmerston) apparently made to be the basis of his government—a government which, after ten days, has experienced a disastrous blow at a time when the noble lord assures us that it is of the utmost importance that the country should feel that it was effectively and strongly governed, and when the noble lord, after circumstances so discouraging to the country, after a week nearly has elapsed since this unfortunate and untoward event has been proclaimed, does not find himself in a condition, at the conclusion of the parliamentary week, to feel, that by his exertions and all his combinations, he can assure the country that his sovereign possesses at this moment a complete body of responsible advisers."

The vacancies created by the retirement of these "three eminent statesmen" were filled up, and the Palmerston cabinet finally "re-burnished." Sir George Cornewall Lewis succeeded Mr. Gladstone as finance minister; Lord John Russell, in spite of his diplomatic appointment, accepted Mr. Sidney Herbert's late post at the colonial office; whilst Sir Charles Wood quitted the India office for the Admiralty. Other minor changes were also effected.

The committee requested by Mr. Roebuck had been formed; its sittings were frequent and its labours excited the deepest interest. Numerous witnesses were examined, and their evidence plainly proved the incapacity and misgovernment of the Aberdeen administration. The Duke of Cambridge himself declared that, while a cabinet minister was assuring the House of Commons that the number of men fit for duty amounted to 30,000, the real number was only 12,000; that the forces were short of food, short of clothing, and ill supplied

with all the necessities that were required for a severe campaign. In the middle of the following June the committee presented its report. It concluded with this grave charge against the coalition cabinet:—"Your committee report that the sufferings of the army resulted mainly from the circumstances under which the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken and executed. The administration which ordered that expedition had no adequate information as to the amount of forces in the Crimea. They were not acquainted with the strength of the fortress to be attacked, or with the resources of the country to be invaded. They hoped and expected the expedition to be immediately successful; and as they did not foresee the probability of a protracted struggle, they made no provision for a winter campaign. The patience and fortitude of the army demand the admiration of the nation on whose behalf they have fought, bled, and suffered. Their heroic valour, and equally heroic patience under sufferings and privations, have given them claims on the country which will doubtless be gratefully acknowledged. Your committee will now close their report with a hope that every British army may in future display the valour which this noble army has displayed, and that none may hereafter be exposed to such sufferings as have been recorded in these pages." Not without just grounds had Mr. Disraeli insisted on the establishment of the Sebastopol committee.

Whilst these ministerial arrangements and parliamentary labours were carried on, hopes had been held out of peace. If necessary the nation was prepared to pursue the hostilities against Russia to the very bitterest end; but at the same time, if a prospect of "peace with honour," as Mr. Disraeli then put it, should be held out, it would be none the less eagerly welcomed. Already the expense of the struggle had amounted to a formidable sum. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, the new chancellor of the exchequer, in his annual

financial statement showed that, though the income of the country had reached the amount of nearly £64,000,000, yet the cost of the present hostilities had caused an excess of expenditure above that sum of no less than £20,000,000. The deficiency he proposed to supply by additional taxation, and by a loan of £16,000,000. His views were at once acceded to; for the larger the supplies, the more effective would be the conduct of the war, and the sooner peace be obtained. For it was now evident that to trust to the efforts of diplomacy was misplaced confidence. The proceedings to obtain peace by negotiation had lamentably broken down; yet at their first commencement the prospect had been assuring. Sardinia, who was anxious to establish for herself a position in the councils of Europe, and to have an opportunity of venting her wrongs against Austria, had given in her adhesion to the cause of the allies, and had increased our strength. The sudden death of the Czar from a cold brought on by reckless exposure, and the accession of his son, the amiable and irresolute Alexander, had led men to hope that there would now be an end to the intrigues of Muscovite ambition. The congress had opened at Vienna, and Lord John Russell had been intrusted with the welfare of England at its deliberations. Four points were to be specially considered—the condition of the Danubian Principalities; the free navigation of the Danube; the limits to be set to Russian supremacy in the Black Sea; and the independence of the Porte. The question as to Russian supremacy in the Euxine broke up the congress. The Czar declined to be controlled by the Western powers, and he most decidedly refused to have any restrictions placed upon his naval strength in the Black Sea. Lord John Russell returned home to explain matters, and to lay before the public how his diplomatic counsels had served the interests of his country.

This explanation was precisely what the nation wanted, but could not obtain. The congress, it was said, had failed, and yet

not failed; it was not closed, but only suspended. Papers were asked for, but could not at present be had. Excuse after excuse was invented to stave off inquiry till ministerial imagination was almost exhausted. If diplomacy had not failed, why were hostilities to be at once resumed? If the congress at Vienna had collapsed, why was not the House of Commons put in possession of the facts? Why this ambiguity and confusion? Mr. Disraeli determined to force the government to give an answer to these questions. He rose (May 24, 1855) to bring forward the following motion:—

“That this House cannot adjourn for the recess without expressing its dissatisfaction with the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty’s government in reference to the great question of peace or war; and that under these circumstances, this House feels it a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace.”

Mr. Disraeli commenced his speech by explaining the reasons which had led him to frame this motion. He considered the conduct of the government had been most uncertain, and their language most ambiguous, with respect to the question of peace or war; they had shelved the resolutions of Mr. Milner Gibson and Mr. Layard, which, if freely discussed, would have elucidated matters;* the country was most anxious as to the future policy of ministers, and therefore under the circumstances, he, Mr. Disraeli, did not feel himself justified in allowing the Whitsuntide holidays to intervene without the government being afforded an opportunity of declaring how they intended to deal with the important interests intrusted to them at that grave

moment. The circumstances to which he was about to call the attention of the House would require no great exercise of memory to command. He was not going to ask them to travel back to the passage of the Pruth, or to the declaration of war. His criticism would refer solely to public transactions of recent date. His canvas was so small that he should commence with the installation in office of the prime minister. Glorious epoch for the country! One could not but remember the triumphant cheers which announced that the crown of parliamentary laurel encircled that “reverend brow.” There was a minister at last who would vindicate the honour of the country; there was a minister at last who would carry on the war like Chatham, and who would maintain his principles in that House like Pitt; there was a man backed by an enthusiastic people to redeem a fallen state! And how had those hopes been realized? When the first fervour was a little past, when men began, as it were, to cease to feel and to commence to think, Sir James Graham—“he having just left the cabinet, and his seat, although filled by a not unworthy successor, being still warm with his ample presence”—addressed an inquiry to the first minister of the crown, and asked whether “there was to be any change in the principles upon which the foreign policy of the new administration was to be conducted, whether the policy recommended and followed by Lord Aberdeen was to be adopted, whether, above all things, there was to be any change in the terms and conditions which our plenipotentiary was to insist upon at the conference of Vienna?” To these questions Lord Palmerston replied, “On the contrary our principles are the same; our policy is entirely identified with the policy of Lord Aberdeen; no difference has been dreamed of for a moment with regard to the conditions upon which peace is to be sought for at the Vienna conference.”

And so Lord John Russell was sent to the congress as the representative of the policy of Lord Aberdeen; he had now

* Mr. Gibson, as a member of the peace party, had made a motion condemning the government for lack of zeal in their endeavour to terminate hostilities; on the other hand, Mr. Layard proposed a resolution, which had for its object to compel the government to demand more exacting terms from Russia.

returned frustrated, he had returned bootless from the conference. "The appointment of the plenipotentiary," remarked Mr. Disraeli after his grave, caustic fashion, "did not at the first blush appear to be a happy one. The noble lord, the member for London, is so distinguished that I find it difficult to fix upon any subject, or upon any part of his life, in which he has not rendered himself remarkable; but I know nothing by which the noble lord has been more distinguished of late than by his denunciations of the power and the ambition of Russia. It is to the noble lord that I think may be mainly attributed—and in his various career his patriotism may be sustained and rewarded by the recollection—the passion of this great country for a decisive struggle with the colossal energies of the Russian empire. The noble lord, then occupying an eminent post—one more eminent, I am sorry to say, than that which he now occupies—addressed, as the leader of the House of Commons, not only fervid but inflammatory harangues to the parliament and people of England, the object of which was to show that war with Russia was the duty of the country, and that it ought to be carried on in no hesitating spirit, but ought to be undertaken by us with a determination of realizing considerable results. . . . I am obliged to refer to these circumstances in order to show the character and the antecedents of the noble lord, who was appointed our plenipotentiary to obtain peace. . . . Well, I have shown that the noble lord, who was selected for a plenipotentiary to obtain peace, was unquestionably an advocate of war, and of war on a great scale. It is of infinite importance when we have to investigate the conduct of the noble lord at this emergency, that we should clearly comprehend what were the antecedents of the noble lord and his qualifications for the office that I think he rashly undertook.

"The House will remember that it is only forty-eight hours since the first

minister of the crown said, that although these negotiations had been unsuccessful, they had been conducted with consummate ability. The noble lord (Palmerston) nods his head. I accept that ceremony as if the noble lord threw down his glove, and I call upon the House of Commons, without respect to party, to give a verdict upon the conduct of our plenipotentiary at Vienna. Do not let it be said that I am making comments upon the conduct of the noble lord because I am a member of a different political party, and that this is a party move. If I show that the noble lord was incompetent for the office that he fatally accepted, if I show that his conduct at those conferences led to consequences prejudicial to the public weal, it is my duty to bring these things forward. It was not enough that the noble lord made the speeches to which I have referred, but he, the plenipotentiary of peace, distinguished himself in this House by the high tone he assumed with regard to Russia and the rulers of Russia; and although then the first minister of state in this House, he did not hesitate to denounce the conduct of the emperor and his ministers as false and fraudulent. The noble lord did more. As the season advanced, as the noble lord's blood grew more warm, in a moment of excitement (it was in the month of July) the noble lord revealed the secret policy of the profound cabinet of which he was a member to the House of Commons; and we then obtained the authoritative information that war was to be carried on, and peace obtained in no less a manner than by the conquest of provinces, and the destruction of that stronghold that threw its frowning shadows over the waters of the Black Sea. The noble lord made an explanation afterwards of the words he used; but, as has been well observed, 'apologies only account for that which they do not alter.'

"When the noble lord thus announced the invasion of the Crimea and the destruction of Sebastopol, I for one said, that I had listened to that statement with dismay.

These," sneered the speaker, "were the qualifications of the plenipotentiary of peace, whose selection did so much credit to the judgment of the first minister, who, called to power by the enthusiasm of the people, and determined to put the right man in the right place, sends a minister to negotiate peace who had proclaimed an internecine war. But these were not all the qualifications of the noble lord. It was not enough that he had distinguished himself by addressing inflammatory harangues to the House of Commons. It was not enough that he had denounced the conduct of the Emperor of Russia and his ministers as false and fraudulent. It was not enough that, in a moment of outrageous and fatal indiscretion he revealed, as one might say, the coming disasters of his country. The noble lord signalized himself by another exploit before he went to make peace for his country. The noble lord destroyed a cabinet. He tripped up the prime minister because he was not earnest enough in prosecuting the war. These were the antecedents, these the qualifications, of the minister plenipotentiary to whom was assigned the fulfilment of the most important duties that have ever been delegated to a subject of the crown since the great congress of Vienna. This was the dove sent out to the troubled waters of Europe.

"It has been said of the noble lord—I think very unjustly—by a high, although anonymous authority, that the noble lord was not qualified for the post of plenipotentiary; in the first place, because he was not an eminent diplomatist; and secondly, because he did not take that leading position at the moment in this country which might have compensated for his want of diplomatic experience in the opinion of the Russian court. That was, I think, unjust, because I shall show that the noble lord has had a great, though not lengthened experience of diplomatic affairs. He was once at the head of the diplomatic body of this country, and in that capacity performed feats of no mean charac-

ter, which greatly influenced subsequent events, and are at this moment influencing the fortunes of this country; and although it is quite true, that having held this office when the noble lord was called upon by his sovereign to form a government, he could only find one gentleman to serve under him, and, strange to say, that gentleman, the present first minister; and although the noble lord, with his great position, and with all his genius, which I admire, finds himself in the agreeable predicament of twice filling a subordinate position in two administrations, which are Whig administrations, still that noble lord is the leader of the great Whig party—that small company," said Mr. Disraeli, ever consistent in his dislike to the governing families, "of great families who ever rule this country when in power, in defiance of our free aristocratic settlement, by the principles of an oligarchy masked in the language of a democracy—and therefore the noble lord, whatever office he may fill, will always be a very considerable man. Let me, then, call the attention of the House to a great event in the career of the noble lord—the key-note of the transactions which occurred when the noble lord was chief of the diplomacy of the country."

Mr. Disraeli then passed in review those "secret communications" between the government of England and the Emperor of Russia, during which Lord John Russell wrote his confidential despatch to Sir Hamilton Seymour, in which he made the notorious admission of acknowledging the protectorate of Russia over the Christian subjects of the Porte—a protectorate which he said was "prescribed by duty and sanctioned by treaty." It had been stated that the erroneous interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji had been the principal cause of the war. By whom, asked Mr. Disraeli, was that erroneous interpretation made? by the noble lord or by the Emperor of Russia? "If by the Emperor of Russia," cried the critic, "it was assented to by the minister of England. What right have we to interfere in this quarrel when the united wisdom of all

these statesmen has found out that 'the erroneous interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji has been the principal cause of the war, and the erroneous interpreter is sitting before me?' They were only at the commencement," predicted Mr. Disraeli, "of the extraordinary mistakes, the fatal admissions, the disgraceful demeanour of the noble lord who, they had been told, had displayed 'consummate ability though unsuccessful.' Lord John had been sent to Vienna for one object, and as to that one object he had most egregiously blundered. They had heard much as to the 'Four Points,' but with regard to the first two points there had been no difficulty. All had gone on swimmingly till the third point had been reached. Then came the discussion; and then it was that Lord John was expected, among others, to do battle for the admission of the Turkish empire into the European confederation, and to decide upon the manner in which the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea should cease to exist. And how did their envoy behave? He rose up and declared that 'the only admissible conditions of peace would be those which, being the most in harmony with the honour of Russia, should at the same time be sufficient for the security of Europe, and for preventing a return of complications such as that the settlement of which is now in question.' No wonder Count Nesselrode considered that declaration as '*une definition fort remarquable!*' Who made the noble lord the judge of the honour of Russia? The noble lord had to think of the honour and interests of his own country. After that '*definition fort remarquable,*' Russia naturally declined to take the initiative offered them in the negotiations—she thought the allies would make proposals more agreeable in spirit than the Russians themselves. And what were the terms offered to Russia? They were most humiliating, and supported by the most infelicitous precedent; Lord John had appealed to the treaty of Utrecht, and the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk.

"Now," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "under what circumstances were the treaty of Utrecht and the negotiations for the destruction of the fortifications of Dunkirk made? After a series of splendid victories achieved by the arms of Marlborough and Eugene—after a series of the most humiliating reverses on the part of a once great king—at the end of a long reign when her resources were exhausted—France, high-spirited France, submitted to the greatest humiliation that her history records. And this is the precedent which is produced by the noble lord, who commences with an admission which makes the honour of Russia an essential qualification in any conditions of peace that may be made." Lord John Russell had placed the possibility of peace by negotiation almost out of the question by his conduct at Vienna. The admission with regard to the honour of Russia was the real cause why the negotiations were broken off, and a knot tied that diplomacy could not loose. "I think the noble lord," summed up Mr. Disraeli, "instead of showing great ability in the conduct of these negotiations, has committed every blunder which a negotiator could possibly accomplish. I think he made fatal admissions at the commencement, and that he had recourse to dangerous illustrations to support his position. I think he dealt with the wrong part of his material first; and that he has so managed the really important element, that so far as negotiation is concerned it is my opinion diplomacy can no longer solve the knot. The noble lord has proceeded in these conferences at Vienna in the same manner in which he proceeded as secretary of state for Foreign Affairs with reference to the confidential communications of Russia. He met them by a diplomatic and historical move conjoined; and guided by history, he has made a diplomatic mistake."

And now at last, exclaimed the speaker, the protocols so anxiously looked for had been laid upon the table. Yet what mean-

ing did they convey? The language of the plenipotentiary seemed to be as ambiguous as his conduct was uncertain in the management of the negotiation, for exactly opposite conclusions had been drawn by different parties in that House from his proceedings. One member thought the negotiations authorized peace; another thought they necessarily concluded in war. The Conservatives were, therefore, extremely anxious to obtain the opinion of the government upon the question, so that the country, now in a state of great perplexity and some discontent, might be guided in their opinions by ministers. What was the position of the country? Was there to be peace, or was there to be war? On what conditions were they to have peace? In what spirit was the war to be carried on? Had the conference concluded its labours, or was it still sitting? Lord Palmerston said one thing, Lord Granville another; which were they to believe? These questions Mr. Disraeli desired to be answered. He was against the principle of "leaving the door open." They should shut the door, and let those who wanted to come in knock at the door, and then endeavour to secure a safe and honourable peace. It was impossible to carry on at one and the same time an aggressive war and a protective policy.

"I deny," cried Mr. Disraeli, "that you can keep up the spirit of the nation in a struggle such as that which we carried on with Napoleon, and such as that which we have to carry on with the Emperor of Russia, if you are perpetually impressing on the country that peace is impending, and if you are perpetually showing the people that the point of difference between ourselves and our opponents is after all, comparatively speaking, of a petty character. Men will endure great sacrifices, if they think they are encountering an enemy of colossal power and resources. A nation will not count the sacrifices which it makes, if it supposes that it is engaged in a struggle for its fame, its influence, and its existence. But when you come to a doubled and

tripled income tax; when you come to draw men away from their homes for military service; when you darken the hearths of England with ensanguined calamities; when you do all this, men must not be told that this is merely a question whether the Emperor of Russia shall have four frigates or eight." Such a course, commented the leader of the Opposition, impressed the public mind with the idea that the country was engaged in a struggle for an object unworthy of the sacrifice. Mr. Disraeli then concluded by begging the House to support his motion, and to put an end to that vicious double system, by which they had so long carried on an aggressive war and a protective diplomacy. The time for negotiation was past, and an end should now be put to the distrust that everywhere prevailed. If diplomacy could bring them an honourable peace, he would cling to its efforts; but he was convinced that further negotiations, instead of securing peace, would only aggravate the dangers and distresses of war. The issue before the House was a simple one, and it was this—"Will you put an end to this diplomatic subterfuge and this ministerial trifling?"

Upon this motion there followed the most important debate of the session. Sir Francis Baring, in an amendment which Mr. Disraeli criticised as having been "cribbed from my thoughts and clothed in my language," moved "That this House, having seen with regret that the conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace." This amendment was in its turn amended by Sir William Heathcote, who proposed to insert after "hostilities" the words, "and still cherishing a desire that the communications in progress may arrive at a successful issue." Speakers on both sides freely aired their eloquence, either in favour of the motion or

the amendments, and showed how eager they were to have the question fully discussed. Mr. Gladstone supported the alteration proposed by Sir William Heathcote. He did not consider that the opportunity should be lost. A war just in its origin would be unjust, if prosecuted after its object had been obtained. The only one of the four points not now settled was the third, and the difference arose, not upon its principle, but upon the mode of its application; so that the quarrel was merely as to the mode of construing a moiety of the third point. Russia had receded from her pretences; she had gone far to put herself in the right, and in war as well as in peace the great object should be to be in the right. All the terms the allied powers had demanded had been substantially conceded; and if it was not for terms they fought, but for military success, such an object was immoral, inhuman, and unchristian.

Lord John Russell, who had been so severely criticised, entered upon an elaborate defence of his conduct. He had never, he said, been very sanguine as to the success that would attend upon these negotiations. He had no habits of diplomacy; and being more accustomed to parliamentary life than to intercourse with those who carry on negotiations, he felt that he was not the fittest person to undertake the duty of plenipotentiary. But he had been requested to perform the mission by Lord Clarendon, and he had obeyed. The limitation of the naval power of Russia was a most difficult and delicate question. The Russian preponderance in the Black Sea was, next to the Russian occupation of the Principalities, the greatest danger with which Turkey was threatened. Lord John then drew a terrible picture of the enormous power of Russia, and of the influence she had gained over Turkey. He justified the declaration which he had made at the conference respecting the conditions to be attached to the third point. He considered that the proposition brought forward should not only be consistent with

the security of Europe, but also compatible with the honour of Russia. Yet in spite of this feeling, he was of opinion that a limitation of the Russian naval power in the Black Sea was indispensable to the security of Constantinople, and the rejection by Russia of that demand was a sure indication of her designs upon that city. Notwithstanding the harsh judgment of Mr. Disraeli, he had nothing to reproach himself with as to his conduct of the recent negotiations, and he did not think the Conservative party would add to its fame or reputation by the course it was now taking. Mr. Lowe, in one of his hard, clear speeches, avoiding all irrelevant matter, proposed a third amendment. He sneered at the Conservatives for keeping their patriotism for their speeches, and putting their party spirit into their motions. He desired to raise the question that really ought to be discussed. The course proposed by Mr. Disraeli and Sir Francis Baring would be discreditable for the House to pursue. He proposed a third amendment—"That this House, having seen with regret, owing to the refusal of Russia to restrict the strength of her navy in the Black Sea, that the conferences at Vienna have not led to a termination of hostilities, feels it to be a duty to declare that the means of coming to an agreement on the third basis of negotiation being by that refusal exhausted, it will continue to give every support to Her Majesty in the prosecution of the war, until Her Majesty shall, in conjunction with her allies, obtain for this country a safe and honourable peace." He took his stand upon the ground agreed to by Russia herself. She had admitted that her preponderance in the Black Sea ought to be put an end to; yet, having made that admission, she declined to limit her naval power. In the opinion of Mr. Lowe, the putting an end to Russian preponderance in the Black Sea, and the limitation of her naval power, were one and the same thing, being but two forms of the same expression. Therefore, there being no means of comply-

ing with the third basis of negotiation, except by limiting the Russian naval power, and that being refused, the conclusion was that that basis was exhausted. If so, it would be beneath the dignity of England to continue the negotiations.

Lord Palmerston then summed up the discussion. He denied that the conduct of ministers had been uncertain or their language ambiguous. Mr. Gladstone by his speech objected to the war, to the expedition to the Crimea, and to the terms proposed at the conferences; and yet the member for the University of Oxford had been a party to all those measures! It was, however, now superfluous to argue the justice and necessity of the war, which was almost universally admitted, and the country was ready to carry it on with energy and vigour. He commented upon the futility of the plans suggested by the Russian plenipotentiaries. There was no pretence for Russia declining to give to Europe a pledge of her good disposition by consenting to a limitation of her naval power in the Black Sea. She had refused the fair conditions offered her, and since England was fully prepared, the war must be carried on. He felt confident that the nation was in earnest as to the war in which they were engaged, and that the people of England would give their support to any government that would honestly and with energy execute the will of the British nation, while they would never sanction any ministry which would abandon its allies and desert that policy, which had been pursued up to that moment in accordance with the will and feelings of the country. He looked with indifference upon the result of the motion. He felt that in whatever hands the government might be placed, the will of the people must and should be obeyed. That will signified that England, having engaged in a just and necessary war, it must and should succeed. He was confident that, although it might be the duty of the government to exhaust the means of negotiation as far as they could be pursued with honour, the people

would never give their support to any administration that should, in expectation of the success of those negotiations, abandon the performance of its duty in the preparation of the means for war.

These were brave words, and they were fully commented upon by Mr. Disraeli (May 25, 1855) in his reply, before the sense of the House was taken upon his motion. If he had felt, he said, any necessity of calling evidence to vindicate the propriety of the conduct which he had pursued, and the justice and policy of the course which he had taken, it would be the speech of Lord Palmerston, who had positively warned the House, in the way of the fulfilment of his duty to carry on the war with effect, not to be influenced by any hope or prospect of any further negotiation for peace. Was that the minister, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, who had evaded every inquiry? Was that the minister who to every question that had been urged upon him, had used every artifice to prevent the House of Commons from obtaining a single expression which would give an indication of the policy of the government, or of the resolution at which they had arrived, on the great question of peace or war? Was that the minister who in every instance had deprecated that inquiry should be made upon the subject, on the ground that even inquiry might interfere with the course of that delicate negotiation that was pending? This change of front, continued Mr. Disraeli triumphantly, had fully justified the motion he had brought forward. Every amendment that had been proposed only went further to sanction the course the Opposition had taken. They had had a full discussion, and every possible opinion had been expressed on the momentous question before them. Whatever might be the fate of his motion, it had at least elicited this good—that at last the country had heard something definite from the government.

"The noble lord," said Mr. Disraeli, referring to the premier, "for some

time, in addressing the House on the subject of the war, has pursued his customary habit of making no allusion to the future; scrupulously shrinking from any expression of his own views, but carefully enumerating all the more the incidents of the past. 'We have a fleet,' says the noble lord, 'in the Baltic, we have a fleet in the Black Sea, we have a medical department, a commissariat staff, and many other establishments, of which we may be proud.' The noble lord reminds me always in this elaborate catalogue which he gives us so frequently, of the *parvenu* in one of Foote's farces, who used to recommend himself to his mistress' good graces by enumerating his possessions. 'I have a house in the country, a house in town, a gallery of pictures, a fine cellar of wines,' and so on. In that way the noble lord for some time has been in the habit of informing us that he has a fleet in the Black Sea and a fleet in the Baltic, that he has a Sardinian contingent to assist his army in the Crimea, that he has a medical department established on the best footing, and those various other things which he has so often recounted; but at last he has felt that the time was come when this was no longer sufficient, when he must speak explicitly respecting the intentions of the government on the question of peace or war." The noble lord, laughed the speaker, therefore, had at last made a declaration which he had refused to express on every other occasion. He had made a declaration perfectly inconsistent with all his previous declarations. The noble lord now stood forward as a war minister, who would be satisfied with nothing less than an achievement, the obtaining of which was perfectly inconsistent with the negotiations which he had been carrying on. Had not, therefore, the words of the motion as to the ambiguity of language and uncertainty of conduct been fully proved?

He was prepared, continued Mr. Disraeli, to maintain in every respect the propriety of his motion. It was not his duty to express the terms upon which he thought

peace ought to be obtained, or the objects for which the war ought to be prosecuted. The House of Commons had no right to interfere with the terms upon which peace or war ought to be proclaimed. Those were the just prerogatives of the crown, and not to be meddled with by the popular assembly.* The motion he had drawn up was proper in its tone, loyal in its language, perfectly adapted to the contingency; and one that every member who wished to end this unsatisfactory state of things should support. "We were," explained Mr. Disraeli, "dissatisfied with the language and the proceedings of the government, especially with reference to recent negotiations and with the conduct of affairs as affecting the great question of peace or war. We were precluded from definitely expressing what we might consider the terms on which peace ought to be negotiated, or the objects for which the war ought to be pursued; and we wished to guard ourselves carefully from any interference with the exercise of the prerogative. Therefore, all we could do was to ask the House if we proved our case, to declare that there were ambiguous language and uncertain conduct on the part of Her Majesty's ministers, not vaguely and abstractedly, but with reference to the great question of peace or war; and if the House were of that opinion—which it would be, if it were to adopt the resolution—we asked it also, to show that there was no ambiguity

* Upon this point Mr. Disraeli was in error, and a few nights afterwards he acknowledged his mistake (June 8, 1855). "Now, I believe," he said, referring to this assertion in his speech, "the best rule of life is never to give an opinion on any subject upon which you yourself have not expended study and research. I unfortunately on that occasion re-echoed an opinion which I had heard from the highest authorities in this House—some of whom are still with us, while others have left us—that it is an interference with the prerogative of the crown for the House in any way to express an opinion as to the terms upon which peace should be obtained, or the objects for which war should be urged. . . . I could easily show that nothing is more certain than that it is the privilege and the duty of the House of Commons upon all fitting occasions to advise Her Majesty as to the terms upon which she should negotiate peace, or the objects for which she should carry on war. It is one of those points which do not admit of doubt." Even so practised a statesman as Lord Palmerston laboured under a similar erroneous impression. He gave the same reason as Mr. Disraeli had given, as an excuse for refusing his assent to the amendment of Mr. Lowe.

in its language, no uncertainty in its conduct, but under the circumstances, in order to prevent any misconception on such a subject, to affirm that it was still determined to continue to support Her Majesty with all its means in the same spirit as when it first addressed the crown in answer to the gracious message of the sovereign announcing that war has been declared."

In conclusion Mr. Disraeli said that he had made out his case, and that the object for which he had been working had been attained. That object was to prevent the prosecution of war and the carrying on of negotiations simultaneously. He had been blamed for his personal attack upon Lord John Russell; yet his comments were perfectly in accordance with parliamentary etiquette. It was the province of the House of Commons to exercise a control over even the highest servants of the sovereign. If an ambassador took a course which was detrimental to the interests of his country, or had not the qualities necessary for a proper discharge of his duties, then it was incumbent on the House of Commons to bring the conduct of such person under consideration, and to ask the opinion of the House upon the subject. If it were true that Lord John Russell, when secretary of state, had acknowledged that Russia had the right, which she most certainly had not, of protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Porte; and if it were true that a false interpretation put upon certain treaties by that noble lord had been the principal cause of the war—was it not his, Mr. Disraeli's, duty to bring the matter before the House? "The noble lord says," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "I degraded the debate; but whatever I have done, I have done this—I have tried to prevent the noble lord from degrading the country."

The opinion of the House was, however, not in favour of Mr. Disraeli's motion; it considered such a motion as shutting the door to negotiation, and excluding the hope of an early and satisfactory peace. Many

also, who agreed with its suggestions, yet looked upon it as a motion of want of confidence, and were not prepared at that moment to cause a change of government. On a division the motion was rejected by 319 against 219.

The amendment of Sir Francis Baring now became a substantive motion, and the debate on the prosecution of the war still continued. The real question at issue was, however, whether the House ought or ought not to make peace upon the Russian proposal with regard to the Third Point. The debate lasted another four nights, and in the discussion that ensued every member of note took part. Mr. Milner Gibson was of opinion that all means of peace had not necessarily been exhausted, because Russia refused to limit the number of her ships. He called on the prime minister to state with frankness the definite objects of the war; and implored the House to pause before it sanctioned a motion that would perpetuate a war which might bring the most formidable disasters on the country. On the other hand, Sir William Molesworth declared that peace upon the Russian terms would be ignominious and dangerous—a confession of defeat covering the allied armies with shame and dishonour. Lord Elcho boldly avowed that the shortest and safest way to peace lay through the breach of Sebastopol, and that the most efficient negotiators would be found, not in the cabinet, but in the camp. Sir Bulwer Lytton, in the most eloquent speech delivered on this occasion, maintained that the object for which the war was begun—the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire secured by guarantees—should be constantly kept in view. To sustain a protective war they could not limit themselves entirely to means purely defensive. It was true they could not crush Russia as Russia, but they could crush her attempts to be more than Russia. Mr. Cobden, in a bitter, mischievous speech, was in favour of peace at any price. Sir James Graham was desirous that the

negotiations should not be broken off; he considered that peace might yet be obtained by a settlement proposed at Vienna. Lord John Russell again asserted that unless Russia consented to reduce her naval force in the Euxine, the security of Turkey would never be assured. Mr. Roebuck hoped Lord Palmerston would maintain a firm, bold, straightforward spirit, cripple Russia, and keep what they had honestly acquired by English valour. To cripple Russia they must not consider her honour; and in crippling her they fought the battle of mankind. Mr. Sidney Herbert declared that peace was now necessary, since the objects for which the war had been waged had been gained. Mr. Bright, in his customary style of coarse invective, after severely commenting upon the conduct of Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, "the authors of the war," did not consider the government was justified in breaking off the negotiations. Mr. Walpole denounced the ambiguous conduct and language of the cabinet, and called upon ministers to state the object of the war. There was a total difference between the terms of peace and the objects of the war, which ought to be the same at the end as at the beginning. He considered that the proposition offered to Russia for the reduction of her naval power in the Black Sea would be illusory as well as humiliating, and pregnant with future differences. It was false that the Conservatives were actuated by party motives, as was plainly apparent by their forbearance at the outset of the contest.

The debate was brought to an end by Mr. Disraeli (June 8, 1855). "I have heard in the course of this debate," he said, "which has now been unusually prolonged, many different characters of our discussion. I have heard that it is a discussion without an object; that it is a wearisome discussion; I have listened to gentlemen, who have apologized for prolonging a debate that was tedious—there was a moment even when this House

now so crowded seemed to tremble for its existence. Four days having now elapsed since the debate commenced, it becomes my duty to offer an impartial opinion upon the subject under our consideration. Somewhat unwillingly—almost unnecessarily—I had thought it would be, having expressed some opinion on the question that engages our attention very recently. But unnecessarily as I had hoped it would be for me to interfere in the matter, I am bound to express my conviction that since I have had the honour of sitting in this House I have never listened to a debate of more importance, the subject of which was of more transcendent interest, in the conduct of which greater abilities have been shown and in which a vaster issue has been at stake, which has thrown greater light upon public transactions, and has placed public men in a more intelligible position, than this debate which it has been convenient for some gentlemen to characterize as one of insignificance. My opinion is that it will be recognized by the country, not only in its immediate character, but also in its ultimate consequences, as one of the most important discussions ever originated and sustained in the House of Commons."

Mr. Disraeli then stated what the issue was before them, and referred to the motives which had induced him to propose his motion. He denied that such motion—which was intended as a vote of censure for a specific act—should have been considered as a vote of want of confidence, or to have carried with it the displacement of the ministry. Over and over again it had been decided that a vote of censure upon some specific conduct was no reason why a government should relinquish office.* Mr. Disraeli then traced the pedigree of the different amendments. The amendment of Sir Francis Baring he considered a case of *felo de se*. That of Mr. Lowe was far more important.

* The case of the Marquis of Londonderry, for instance. Lord Londonderry had been nominated, much to the disapproval of the House of Commons, ambassador at St. Petersburg. An address to the crown was moved against the appointment, yet the premier of that day did not resign.

It was in itself a complete and perfect proposition, and one of the most momentous ever laid before the House of Commons. It stated that, in consequence of Russia having refused to reduce the fleet in the Black Sea, the means of negotiation were exhausted, and therefore they were called upon to rally round the sovereign and support Her Majesty in the war. The question before them was, therefore, not an obscure and insignificant one; on the contrary, a more important proposition was never brought forward.

"Let me," said he gravely, "venture to impress upon the House the nature of the question which they are now called upon to investigate. There are very few of us who have been members of this House when England has been at war. We, with very rare exceptions, have only sat here when questions of a very different character have absorbed the public interest and exercised public intelligence. But remember, there is one vast difference between questions of domestic and questions of foreign policy. The power of a majority in the House of Commons is a great thing; it is an inestimable treasure to a minister; its influence (subject, no doubt, to certain conditions) is omnipotent so far as domestic questions are concerned. A minister may, by the aid of a parliamentary majority, support unjust laws, and may support a political system which a quarter of a century afterwards may, by the aid of another parliamentary majority, be condemned; the passions, the prejudices, and the party spirit that flourish in a free country may support and uphold him in the course he is taking. But when you come to foreign politics things are very different. Every step that you take is an irretrievable one, and the consequences of your conduct are immediate and palpable. A false step in such a case cannot be retraced; you cannot, as you do on domestic questions, rescind your policy, calculate the loss you have sustained by the unwise system you have pursued, and console yourselves by thinking

that for the future you will shun a policy proved to be injurious. If you make a mistake in your foreign affairs; if you enter into unwise treaties; if you conduct campaigns upon vicious principles; if the scope and tendency of your foreign system are founded upon want of information or false information, or are framed with no clear idea of what are your objects and your means of obtaining them, there is no majority in the House of Commons which can long uphold a government under such circumstances. A majority under such circumstances will not make a government strong, but will make this House weak. Therefore, I do intreat the House carefully to consider the course they are taking on this question, and to be sure before giving their votes that they are sanctioning sound principles, and that, when they think they are only supporting their political friends, they may not be injuring their country—that when they cheer over a majority, as they cheered the other evening, the day may not be coming, and that rapidly, when they will remember that cheer with confusion and shame."

Mr. Disraeli then stated the course he should take, and specified the reasons why he adopted such a course. He did not attach the value to the third point which certain members had placed upon it. In his opinion it was a proposition that ought never to have been made, and which, if carried out, would be essentially inefficient. The object of the government was to reduce the naval preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. The object of the Conservative party at present was to check or, if possible, to destroy what was called the preponderance of Russia as against Turkey. The preponderance of Russia, as regarded Turkey in the political system, was not limited to the Black Sea. Of the three quarters from which Turkey might be menaced by Russia, the Black Sea was the one that was least to be dreaded. Turkey was assailable by Russia from the Danube, from Asia, and from the Black Sea. What was called the

preponderance of Russia equally pressed upon Turkey from the Danube and from Asia, as from the Euxine. The condition insisted upon by the government only pretended to meet the difficulties and dangers which might arise from Russian preponderance in the Black Sea. Yet it was impossible for Russia to be dangerously aggressive in the Black Sea. She had not the power of sending an army with the necessary cavalry, artillery, and means of transport from Sebastopol to any port on the Turkish coasts in the Euxine. All that Russia could do under any circumstances would be to throw troops on the coast, as she did in 1828, at Sizeboli and Bourgas; but the troops thus disembarked never moved, nor had they power to move. Undoubtedly to have command of the sea was a great advantage to Russia in any war with Turkey, but it was not an advantage which would ever be decisive as regards the results of war. France almost conquered the world, while England had command of the sea. The condition, therefore, which Lord John Russell had made the mainstay of his diplomacy at Vienna was inefficient.

It was also impolitic. He, Mr. Disraeli, had been blamed for condemning Lord John Russell's anxiety as to the honour of Russia. It had been said that the noble plenipotentiary had been quite justified in considering the honour of Russia in all the arrangements contemplated. Who denied it? It was not only the first principle in diplomacy, but in common life; for in ordinary affairs, when adjusting differences and making arrangements intended to be permanent, it was only common courtesy to consider the honour of the opposing party, and he should have greatly blamed the noble lord if in any scheme of negotiation he had failed in so great a duty. He, therefore, did not condemn Lord John for consulting the honour of Russia; but he blamed him for making the great and unnecessary admission, previously to the negotiations, that the honour of Russia

must be considered in any arrangements that might be made—thus giving Russia an excuse to avoid commencing negotiations herself and of answering every proposition, by alleging that her honour was concerned, of which Russia was the only judge. He referred to the admission, continued Mr. Disraeli, because he wished to impress on the House that, not only was the condition of the noble lord inefficient, but impolitic, because it was unnecessarily humiliating to Russia. Lord John Russell had apparently regulated the whole of his conduct in this affair by the treaty of Utrecht. Sebastopol was to be dismantled, as Dunkirk had been dismantled; but the course of the war not justifying these sanguine anticipations, the dismantling of Sebastopol took the more qualified shape of the limitation of the fleet. Yet what parallel was there between Russia under the Czar Alexander and France under Louis XIV.? The treaty of Utrecht secured a peace only wrung from Louis when the nation was utterly exhausted by the expenses of a ruinous war, and the spirit of the people completely broken. Was that a parallel which Lord John was justified in initiating, and which he quoted in vindication of his demand to Prince Gortchakoff? Was it wise to humiliate Russia by implying that she was in so pitiable a condition? On the contrary, was not such a demand most impolitic?

He next had to deal, said Mr. Disraeli, with the question of the preponderance of Russia as regards Turkey. It was no new phenomenon in their political experience. The history of Europe was the history of attempts to check and control the preponderance of great states over neighbouring weaker ones, in the independence of which Europe has had an interest. Louis XIV. had invaded the Netherlands, and Napoleon the Great had conquered the Netherlands, and yet at the present day the Netherlands were independent; and the preponderance of France, which for a century and a half was exerted upon that battlefield, had been baffled. The united

will of Europe had established the neutrality of Belgium, one of the battlefields of Europe. Switzerland was one of the battlefields of Europe, and its independence was menaced by the preponderance of Austria; but the congress of Vienna established the neutrality of Switzerland. Thus there were means by which the preponderance of a great power over a weaker might be controlled; and the question to consider was whether the project of the government was the best means of controlling the preponderance of Russia with respect to Turkey? What he complained of in the negotiations of the government was, continued Mr. Disraeli, that he saw no evidence of a recurrence to those means by which statesmen of great ability and unquestioned reputation had attempted to deal with difficulties similar to those with which the government had now grappled.

Mr. Disraeli then suggested the measures which should be adopted to curb the power of Russia. The neutrality of the Principalities should be established. By that course the frontier of Turkey on the Danube would be reduced; whilst Russia, should she attempt to invade Turkey on that side, would have to pass a large river, and then to enter on the fell and pestiferous steppes of the Dobrudscha, to pass the fortresses of Schumla and Varna on its left, and Silistria on its right. Such difficulties Russia would never be able to surmount. With regard to the Asiatic frontier nature was not so favourable to diplomacy, since there were no natural barriers; but would Lord John Russell pretend that it was impossible to establish artificial barriers? Why should not fortresses be erected at Erzeroum and Kars, and on other points of the Asiatic frontier, to be periodically inspected by English commissioners? In the event of peace it should also be stipulated that the fortresses on the eastern coast of the Black Sea should be destroyed. That was not a stipulation which would injure the pride of any nation, however great; yet it was

one which would render imperfect the military communications of Russia in those waters, and which would, more than any other condition that could be devised, consolidate the power of Turkey, and secure the possession of Constantinople to the Ottoman empire. These suggestions which he had advanced had been sanctioned by great men, and he thought them well worthy the attention of the House.

"I will not, however," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "pursue this theme, as many other opportunities will be afforded me for discussing it. What I have been anxious on the present occasion to do, when these crude schemes of the government are placed before us, and when we are told that peace cannot be effected because these inefficient and useless methods have not been successful at the conferences, is to show—first, that it is our duty to denounce such ineffectual propositions; and in the next place, to inform the minds of the people of this country on the subject, and to convince them that there are practical, sound, and solid means by which the great problem in modern politics can be solved. The right hon. baronet, the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham), told us the other night that the new generation of statesmen should occupy their minds in considering what was to occur when the Turkish empire—an event which he said was inevitable—should be no more. I cannot agree in opinion with the right hon. gentleman on that subject. I believe that there are elements when Turkey shall be more fairly treated—and never has any country been more unfairly treated than Turkey, especially within the last two years—for securing the independence of her empire, and (what to us is of vital interest) preventing Constantinople from becoming an appanage to any great military power. But if you carry on the war for that object—and that is our object—you must carry it on with more definite views and on a more natural system than you have given any evidence

of yet. We can only judge of your policy, we can only judge of your resources, we can only judge of your ability to deal with great difficulties from the records you have placed upon the table, and which give the history of the conduct of your government; and records more barren of information, more calculated to impress me with the melancholy conviction of the incompetency of our statesmen to deal with subjects of vital concernment to a great nation, never yet met my eye or engaged my attention. The noble lord (Lord Palmerston) may rest assured that it is not the language of party that I am now uttering. He is too able a man not to be convinced that the irresistible course of European events will baffle all mere party politicians, and that no party support can sustain a minister whose policy will not stand the test of time and the scrutiny of an impartial public, and prove to be a policy the result of study, meditation, and an anxious desire to attain the truth.

"The noble lord, though he may for a moment defy the words of those who sit opposite to him in this House, and though he may be sustained by a majority collected God knows how, and voting God knows why, may rest assured that if he and his colleagues are pursuing a course without sufficient knowledge, without sufficiently clear ideas, without a resolution sufficiently firm—that if there is any wavering in their councils, which is the natural consequence of an ignorance of the subject with which they have to deal—if there is any hesitation—if at this moment, when they are about to vote, they have not a definite idea of the object for which they are struggling, and of the means by which they are to accomplish the avowed purpose which we have agreed in this House is the object which we wish to achieve, namely, the preservation of Constantinople to the Ottoman Porte—then, I say, the noble lord may rest assured that the utmost confusion and consternation will fall upon the cabinet of which he is a member, and that no parliamentary power can sustain a ministry dealing with great

transactions to which they are not competent; and that if they are conducting our foreign affairs as they have hitherto conducted our home affairs—I speak now of preceding as well as present governments—living from hand to mouth, adopting merely the whim of the moment, not influenced by any principle founded on knowledge, and acting upon no natural system and for no determined purpose—then the noble lord may rest assured that his ministry must fall, or if it continue, the future of this country is a future of gloom too terrible for imagination to contemplate."

Lord Palmerston replied upon the whole debate. He appealed to the common patriotic feeling of the House in support of the crown and the government to carry through a struggle necessary for the interest and honour of the country. The "peace at any price" party were the only members who had introduced bitterness and passion into an important and gravely conducted debate. "With peace in their mouths," he sneered, "they have nevertheless had war in their hearts; and their speeches were full of passion, vituperation, and abuse, and delivered in a manner which showed that angry passions strove for mastery within them. I must say, judging from their speeches, their manner, and their language, that they would do much better for leaders of a party for war at all hazards, instead of a party for peace at any cost." Lord Palmerston then said, that as the amendment of Sir Francis Baring was almost exactly such a one as the government themselves would have proposed, he foresaw that a large majority would rally to vote for that amendment, and thus enable ministers to give effect to the wishes of parliament and the country in carrying out the object of the war. And what was that object? It was to prevent "the partition of Turkey" by a gigantic power which would stride like a Colossus from the Baltic to the Mediterranean; and in so doing, not only protect the Sultan, but that very trade of their manufacturing

districts which Russia prohibited and Turkey enlarged. "I trust," said Lord Palmerston, in conclusion, "that party feeling will for one night be set aside; that, as it is no longer a conflict of party—the vote a fortnight ago having silenced that question—we shall, at least for one night and upon one occasion, be unanimous in our assurances to the crown that we are determined, as the true representatives of the people of this great country, to give to Her Majesty the best support we can in the prosecution of the war to the attainment of a safe and honourable peace."

Mr. Lowe's amendment was then put, and negatived without a division; after which the amendment of Sir Francis Baring was carried without further opposition.

Such was the end of this memorable debate. It plainly proved both the truth and the necessity of Mr. Disraeli's motion.

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Almost every speech that was delivered on the occasion went to show that the ministers were divided as to the objects of the war—were uncertain in their conduct, and ambiguous in their language. Though the motion was not adopted, it forced the hand of the government, and compelled the Palmerston cabinet to abandon their policy of blundering hesitation and dangerous confusion. It showed that the negotiations at the conference had been conducted on a false basis, that ministers had set no issue clearly before them, that they were divided in their councils, and blindly dependent upon the slippery councils of Austria. It also proved how soundly the man "who had not one drop of English blood in his veins" interpreted the wishes of the nation, how exacting, yet non-aggressive, was his patriotism, and how jealous he was of England's honour and reputation.

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CHAPTER XIV.

"PEACE."

A FEW days after the vacillating cabinet had decided upon abandoning diplomacy for active hostilities, the hero of a hundred fights, to whom the fortunes of the British army were intrusted, passed to his rest. It was known, when Lord Raglan consented to accept the post of commander-in-chief of our forces in the East, that his health was indifferent; still it was hoped that the campaign would be a speedy one, and that the gallant officer would not seriously suffer at his time of life from being again sent upon active service. But the difficulties of his situation, the unnecessary privations his men had to undergo, and the unjust censures then freely passed upon his command, all tended to depress and enfeeble his proud and sensitive spirit, and thus prepare the way for the sickness that was to lay him low. Yet he died a soldier's death, fighting the cause of his country in a distant land; and his last moments were soothed by the thought that his long career might by those who loved him be looked back upon without shame or fear. His life had been one incessant period of civil and military activity. At an early age he had embraced the profession of arms. In 1807 he was selected by the Duke of Wellington to serve upon his staff on the occasion of the expedition to Copenhagen. So great were his talents, and cool his judgment, that the great duke held Lord Fitzroy Somerset, as he was then called, in such high estimation, that the two men were afterwards inseparable. There was no action in which the Duke of Wellington was engaged in the Peninsular war in which the future Lord Raglan did not play a conspicuous part. At the siege of Badajos he was among the foremost in the breach at the

capture of that celebrated fortress, and it was to him that the governor of that town surrendered his sword. At Waterloo his gallantry won for him great distinction, and there he had the misfortune to be wounded, and sustained the loss of an arm. During the forty years' peace he worked assiduously at the Horse Guards, assisting successive commanders-in-chief with his able advice and co-operation, and being no less useful to his country than he had been eminent in time of war. So distinguished were his services, that he was honoured with a peerage. In spite of the obstacles against which he had to contend, his command of the army in the East, in all the operations in which it had been engaged, had been eminently successful. In his death England lamented the loss of a great soldier, a great general, and a great gentleman.

So distinguished a commander was not permitted to descend into the tomb without recognition. The following message was announced to parliament:—"Her Majesty, taking into consideration the great and brilliant services performed by the late Fitzroy James Henry, Lord Raglan, field-marshal in Her Majesty's army, and commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces at the seat of war in the East, in the course of the hostilities which have taken place in the Crimea; and being desirous, in recognition of these and his other distinguished merits, to confer some signal mark of her favour upon his widow, Emily Harriet Lady Raglan, upon his son and successor to the title, Richard Henry Lord Raglan, and the next surviving heir male of the body of the said Richard Henry Lord Raglan—recommends to her faithful Com-

mons the adoption of such measures as may be necessary for the accomplishment of that purpose."

In both Houses this message was considered, and gave rise to a complimentary debate, in which the merits and services of the deceased commander were feelingly and eloquently commented upon. Lord Palmerston proposed that the annual sum of £1000 should be settled upon Lady Raglan, the widow, and a further annual sum of £2000 settled upon Lord Raglan, the son, in tail male. Mr. Disraeli seconded the proposition (July 3, 1855), in one of his customary graceful funeral orations. "I rise, sir," he said, "to second the resolution of the noble lord, which I doubt not will meet with the unanimous acceptance and approbation of this House. After half a century of public service, all that which was noble and sometimes illustrious ought not to be permitted to pass away without the record and recognition of a nation's gratitude. The career of Lord Raglan was remarkable. Forty years ago he sealed with his blood the brilliant close of a great struggle against the danger of universal empire; and after that long interval he has given to his country his life, in order to guard it against the menaces of a new and overwhelming enemy. The qualities of Lord Raglan were remarkable, and it may be doubted whether they will be supplied by a successor, however able. That which, perhaps, most distinguished him was an elevation and serenity of mind that invested him, as it were, with a heroic and classical repose; that permitted him to bring to the management of men and the transaction of great affairs the magic influence of character; and that often in his case accomplished results otherwise produced by the inspiration of genius. Perhaps there is no instance on record in which valour of so high a character was so happily and so singularly allied to so disciplined a discretion. Never were courage and caution united in so great a degree of either quality. Sir, over the tomb of the great

departed, criticism must be silent; but even here it must be permitted to all of us to remember that the course of events has sanctioned the judgment of that commander with respect to those difficulties with which it was his hard fate to cope, but which, his country must recollect, he did not choose or create. May those who succeed him encounter a happier fortune; they will not meet a more glorious end; for there is nothing more admirable than self-sacrifice to public duty. That was the principle which regulated the life of Somerset; it was the principle which he carried with him to the grave. I feel great pride in seconding the resolution." The resolution was agreed to (it being in the days before Ireland had degraded herself by sending her present representatives), without a dissentient vote.

The popular chamber was, however, soon to ring with a debate of a very different character. We have heard how Lord John Russell, immediately after his return from Vienna, had expressed in no doubtful terms his views as to the renewal of hostilities with Russia. The Czar had refused to limit his naval power in the Black Sea; he should therefore be compelled, cried the envoy, to submit to the proposals of diplomacy by the force of arms. Hence the world believed that the negotiations at Vienna had been broken off with the approval of the English plenipotentiary. It now appeared that, in spite of this bellicose tone, Lord John Russell had approved of the terms of peace suggested by Austria; he had laid them before the Congress, and he had returned home with the object of supporting them in the cabinet. This double-dealing was made public, not through ministers, but through the publication of certain Austrian official documents in the continental newspapers. No sooner had the discovery become known, than a strong feeling of indignation was excited throughout the country against our late envoy. Why, it was angrily asked, had not Lord John been himself the first

to inform the House of Commons that the terms submitted by the Austrian government had met with his approval, and that he was still in favour of them? Why, with peace in his heart, did he consent to occupy a seat in a cabinet pledged to carry on war? Why did he not have the courage of his opinions and resign his post, as his French colleague, M. Drouyn de Lhuys, had resigned? What were the reasons he could assign for completely setting aside, upon coming home to England, his own convictions upon the most important question of modern times, and surrendering his judgment and abnegating his opinions to his colleagues in the cabinet? If such conduct were to be permitted to pass unquestioned, there was an end of all confidence in government and in the honour of public men.

Such jesuitical diplomacy was, however, not to pass unquestioned. The case came before parliament, and Mr. Milner Gibson requested Lord John to explain his conduct, and how it was, if the facts were as reported, his lordship, bound by his promise to Count Buol the Austrian minister, still retained his place in a cabinet pledged to cripple Russia now that the proposals of the Congress had been rejected? The answer of the late plenipotentiary was among the most singular that refutation has ever set forth. It was quite true, replied Lord John, that he had concurred in the Austrian propositions; he had thought they would give not a certainty, but a very fair prospect of the duration of peace, and they had met with his full approval. On quitting Vienna he informed Count Buol that the instructions he had received from London led him to suppose that the Austrian proposals would not be accepted; but that his own opinion was that they ought to be, and might be accepted. He, therefore, promised the Count that on his return to England he would do his best to place those propositions in such a light that the Austrian government might hope for their adoption. He had fulfilled his promise. The Austrian

suggestions had been deliberately considered by the cabinet; but the government had arrived at the conclusion that the peace proposed would not be a safe peace, and that they could not recommend its adoption. Why, then, asked Lord John, did he still continue a member of the government? He occupied a two-fold position. As a plenipotentiary it was for him to submit to the decision of the government; as a member of the cabinet it was his duty to consider the circumstances of the time. He had so lately abandoned his seat, there had been so many secessions from the cabinet, there had been so great a disposition on the part of the public to denounce all authority and to call in question the characters of all public men, that he did not think himself justified under the extraordinary circumstances in maintaining his own opinions upon this grave question, by surrendering his seat in the cabinet which had overruled his own convictions, at the risk of bringing about another change. Though out of office, he might have given every support to the government; he felt that his resignation would have increased the instability of the administration and would have been considered the precursor of other changes. Within the cabinet it was the duty of the minority to give way to the majority, if there was a majority and a minority; it was the duty of the individual to defer to the sentiments of the cabinet in general, and to leave it to the House of Commons to decide whether or not ministers were to be trusted with the control of public affairs.

This answer was rightly deemed most unsatisfactory, and keenly criticised by the House. It was said that if the example of Lord John Russell were to be considered as a precedent, it would strike at the very foundation of all confidence in public men, and render it impossible that the representative system could be carried on with success. The public had faith in public men because they believed that public men had certain opinions, were swayed by certain

principles, and might be relied upon to act according to their convictions. Lord John Russell had acted throughout this affair in a mean and underhand fashion. He had led the country to believe that he had returned from Vienna disgusted with the proposals for peace made in that city, and that he was therefore anxious to stimulate the passion of the country in order that the war might be carried on more vigorously. Yet all the time he was the advocate of the Austrian proposals of peace, and considered that such proposals offered "a guarantee for the security of Europe!" He was a peace minister in a war cabinet. Such double-dealing with the confidence of the country it would be hard to equal.

Mr. Disraeli did not permit the occasion to pass without addressing the House (July 6, 1855). "This evening," he said, "is memorable, and will long be memorable in the history of this country for the revelations and for the confessions on the part of a minister of state holding a very high and peculiar position—confessions and revelations which probably have not been before equalled in the memory of any man living. What have we heard to-night so unexpectedly, and which if I am not mistaken is destined to impress itself so seriously and painfully on the minds and opinions of this nation? We have had to-night an admission from the noble lord, the secretary of state for the colonies, who was recently employed by his sovereign in the high position of minister plenipotentiary to negotiate on a subject of no less moment than that of peace or war, that after having given, as he has admitted, great care and anxiety to the prosecution of his labours, he arrived at a favourable solution of the difficulties with which he had to contend, and had in his own mind accomplished measures which would have secured peace for this country, and that to recommend these measures to the government which employed him he returned to England. Strange to say, it seems the noble lord found no sympathy

on the part of his colleagues. They did not agree in the policy which he recommended. They decided upon a course totally adverse to that which he wished to sanction. They decided on a course no less decisive than the prosecution of that war which, in his opinion, ought to have terminated. The noble lord accedes to the suggestions of his colleagues. He remains in the cabinet of which he was a member during the negotiations; he remains in that cabinet—a minister of peace—and as a member of that cabinet he recommends the vigorous prosecution of that war in his place in this House.

"The reasons which the noble lord has given for this extraordinary course appear to me no less singular than his conduct. This is no slight question. The honourable and learned gentleman who has preceded me (Mr. Roebuck) in this debate has fairly said that it may be considered as the most important of all political questions. There is hardly a member of this House who would place any measure to regulate our internal condition, however high its aim, in the same category as a question whether peace should be accomplished or whether war should be prosecuted. The noble lord has told us to-night, notwithstanding it was his conviction that peace might be obtained and ought to be obtained, that he considered it his duty to support the policy of war, and which he has accordingly done, both as an eminent member of the cabinet and of this House. The noble lord has rested the vindication of his course on a principle which, according to his version, is calculated to raise his character as a public man, who by so acting has absolutely sacrificed his own feelings to his sense of public duty. I may differ from the view which the noble lord has taken on this subject; but I think that the question of peace or war, especially under the circumstances in which this country finds itself at present, is one that ought not to be an open question. Lax as have been the rules and regulations in recent cabinets with

regard to open questions, I certainly cannot conceal my surprise at learning to-night from high authority that peace and war are open questions in the existing administration. But what I want to ask, after these extraordinary revelations of the minister, is this—is this House for peace or for war? Because whatever may be the opinions of hon. gentlemen, whatever the opinions of those gentlemen who with great ability advocate their views in favour of peace, or those of gentlemen on this and on the other side of the House who think that the war should be prosecuted with vigour and energy, still I shall assume that we must all be of this mind, that there is very little chance of either obtaining a satisfactory peace or prosecuting a successful war, if in the very bosom of the cabinet such contrary sentiments prevail, and if the most eminent members in the councils of Her Majesty are influenced by ideas so conflicting on questions so vital. The question of peace or war must always in all countries, but especially in a free country, be a subject of controversy; but all parties, nevertheless, will agree in this, that whether we are to have peace or war Her Majesty's ministers ought at any rate to be unanimous on the point. I cannot, indeed, see any chance of efficient and vigorous action in either respect, or for either result, if the present state of affairs continues such as it has been described to us to-night with startling candour by the noble lord, the secretary of state, whose revelations will, I doubt not, long linger in the ears of the people of this country."

And now, asked Mr. Disraeli, was he wrong in having described such a state of affairs, except by such expressions as "ambiguous language and uncertain conduct?" Events had fully vindicated the course he had taken. After the speech of Lord John Russell, not a member of the House could not but feel that the country had suffered from that "ambiguous language and uncertain conduct." In what position did the House of Commons place itself when it

found now, at the end of the session, that it had lost every opportunity of vindicating the policy it ought to have pursued? "I wish to know," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "what is the position in which this country now finds itself with respect to the prosecution of this war, in consequence of the confession of the minister to-night? Two years ago, or less, when the whole country and the House were complaining of the great neglect displayed by the administration of this country in preparing for the war then impending, what was the excuse made for ten precious months which had been wasted? It was that we were preparing and securing those great alliances, without which there would be little prospect of the war being waged with success. Well, I want to know what probability there is of our obtaining the assistance of what were styled by a member of the then government the great German Powers, after the admission made to-night by a leading member of the government? How can we appeal again to Prussia, or ask any European power to assist us in this struggle, when we have acknowledged to Europe that just terms have been proposed by Austria on which peace might be obtained—when that has been acknowledged by our plenipotentiary extraordinary and one of our leading statesmen? Will not Austria, Prussia, or any other state, turn round and reply to the demands of our ministers, 'We do not at all agree with you in the necessity of making renewed efforts to curb the ambition of Russia; we think that the elements of a durable peace are in the power of able managers of circumstances, and our authority for so thinking is the distinguished statesman you sent to Vienna to represent your interests, and to advocate such a settlement of these disturbed relations as might appear most advantageous.' Well, then, I say that the effect of the debate to-night on our prospect of conducting this war with success is of very evil tendency. Nor is it merely on our alliances that the

admissions of the noble lord have injurious consequences. Whenever we enter into negotiations again with Russia there is upon record—placed there by the noble lord as a guide to Russia—a statement of what we consider our just demands might require. Whether, therefore, we look to our alliances, or contemplate negotiations with our enemy—whether we look to the influence of public opinion in this country, of those who advocate war, or who wish to accomplish peace—an equally injurious effect will be created by the extraordinary communications made to the House to-night by the secretary of state."

He came then to the point, continued Mr Disraeli, what was the object of the war? what were the ends which the government proposed to themselves? Unless ministers dealt frankly with the country it was totally impossible to carry on the war with the vigour necessary to success. What chance had the cabinet of creating or maintaining enthusiasm in the people if the suspicion got abroad, as it must do after the present debate, that ministers were making of the question of peace or war merely the means of maintaining themselves in office; that peace and war were convenient or inconvenient just as they might create or influence a majority? If such an idea ever became prevalent, he knew nothing which would more deaden the spirit of the country.

"And how are you," concluded the leader of the Opposition, "to extricate yourselves from the peculiar difficulties in which you are now placed? How are you to remove all those disadvantages except by coming forward frankly and speaking to the House and to the country after this fashion:—'Our eminent colleague exerted himself for a great object. We are of course, as all are, favourable to peace; but our colleague was too zealous for the good cause in which he embarked—he made admissions which we considered fatal to the interests of the country, and we could not support him in the course he took. We do not think that

he showed that prescience, that acquaintance with the subject, that statesmanlike sagacity that are necessary. It is painful for us to make these admissions; but we must do our duty to our country, and we tell you that the noble lord entered into arrangements which we entirely disapprove. Our policy is different. The policy which we intend to pursue is one of great vigour, which aims at great results, which will not be satisfied unless the power of Russia is materially reduced; and it is entirely opposed to the policy which the noble lord pursued.' But then unfortunately, under such circumstances, the noble lord the secretary of state would probably find it necessary to quit the cabinet of which he is so important a member. Well, then, has it come to this? Is this to be the end of this important session?—the end of breaking up so many governments?—the end of our great efforts, our great disasters—of the struggle in which the nation has engaged? of that government at the head of which we were to have a minister of surpassing energy, and no doubt transcendent experience? Is this the end of the ministry which was to put the right men in the right places? Is this the end—that even peace and war have become mere party considerations, that the interests of the country are sacrificed to the menace of a majority, and that the turbulent assemblies of Downing Street are to baffle all the sagacity of all the conferences of Vienna?"

The course pursued by Lord John was not to be visited merely with comment and criticism, and then to be calmly forgotten. By all right thinking men the conduct of our envoy was considered to have been inconsistent with those principles of political honesty which ought to govern the consciences of all public individuals. Sir Bulwer Lytton gave expression to this almost general feeling. He proposed a vote of censure in the following terms:—"That the conduct of our minister in the recent negotiations at Vienna has, in the

opinion of this House, shaken the confidence of this country in those to whom its affairs are intrusted."

Had a debate taken place on this motion there can be little doubt that Lord John Russell would have been expelled from the cabinet by parliamentary censure. His recent conduct had been judged most harshly, since it seemed impossible even for his best friend to invent extenuating circumstances. He had returned to England with a project of pacification which he approved; he had laid that project before his colleagues, and it had been rejected; as an advocate of peace he still continued to belong to an administration pledged to carry on war; and in addition to these inconsistencies, he had delivered a speech in the House of Commons which conveyed to the country that he was an uncompromising advocate of war, that he had returned from Vienna with the conviction that an uncompromising prosecution of the war was absolutely necessary, and that from his experience in the conferences at the Congress it was impossible to enter upon an attempt at negotiation with any reasonable hopes of success. In other words, Lord John conveyed to parliament and the country an impression utterly inconsistent with the facts of the case. Conscious of the hostility he had excited against himself, and also of the punishment awaiting him, the late plenipotentiary resolved to solve the difficulty, and cease further to embarrass his colleagues, by tendering his resignation. Before a full and by no means sympathetic House his lordship explained the reasons which had led him to take this step. It had been stated, he said, that he had pledged himself to use his influence with the government to accept the Austrian proposals. That was not true; yet it was perfectly true that he had placed those proposals before the cabinet, and had used all argument to have them accepted. He believed that they would have afforded the means of combining all the powers against the future

aggressions of Russia, and have placed Turkey in a position of security. It had been made a matter of reproach to him, that since his return from Vienna he had been in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war. Yet, after the rejection of the Austrian propositions, what other course was open to him? It had been said that parliament had not been informed at the time of the fact of these proposals. With that he had nothing to do; it was the duty of the foreign secretary to make such communications; still he thought it was quite right on the part of the government to abstain from a premature communication, which would have been unjustifiable and a dereliction of duty on their part. The Opposition appeared to believe that there were but two abstract points to be considered—peace or war. The government had viewed the matter differently. They thought peace preferable to war, that satisfactory terms might be obtained, and that a limitation of the Russian fleet would furnish a security, though an imperfect one, such as would justify a termination of the war. When the Austrian suggestions, continued Lord John, were declined, he returned to his former opinion, and was in favour of a vigorous prosecution of the war. The impression, however, seemed to prevail that because he had taken a favourable view of the Austrian propositions he must be ever after incapable of serving Her Majesty during the war. He did not agree with that impression. Still, he plainly saw it existed; and considering that under the circumstances his presence in the cabinet would be disadvantageous, he had pressed his resignation, which had been accepted.

"Now, sir," he concluded, "let me say, that having taken that course, I do not feel that I am at all discontented with the position in which I stand. I see no reason to be so. In the first place, I have acted always for what I believe to be the benefit of the country. I have thought over these questions again and again with a view to

the public interest, and I have refrained from advising that which was disapproved, or rather, I should say, that which did not obtain the concurrence of those who generally held the same views as myself, and who were acting with me in the same administration. I have felt that, in the position which I have occupied at various times, I have found many true and attached friends, and I must say that, towards them, beginning with the members of the cabinet which I have left, I have every reason to thank those friends for their confidence and friendship. But, sir, others there certainly are of a different class :—

“ ‘Those you make friends

And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
Like water from ye, never found again
But when they mean to sink ye.’

Some there are of that class—I trust but few—with respect to whom I can only say, that I regard them with contempt. With regard to public affairs, it has been my fortune, far beyond my deserts, to carry on or assist in carrying measures which have promoted civil and religious liberty, which have tended to the promotion of the moral and religious welfare of this empire. I say, sir, that I have had that good fortune, far beyond my deserts, and that is a satisfaction of which I cannot be deprived. That in the course which I have pursued, and in the positions which I have at various times filled, I should have been slandered and calumniated, is a circumstance at which I ought to feel neither surprise nor dissatisfaction. There have been men whom I have known, and among them I cannot but recollect my dearly loved friend, the late Lord Althorp, whose only ambition it was to steer clear of office, and who, when he held the highest offices in the state—purely for the good of his country—only aspired to descend from them, and yet I have known him calumniated as seeking place. I have seen but lately a gallant and a skilful soldier calumniated—I mean the great and humane Lord Raglan, who was slandered

and persecuted even to the very verge of the grave. I say, therefore, that I can feel no dissatisfaction, and no surprise, at being myself thus calumniated; but if I had to balance my political account with my calumniators, I could say to them that I have been able to promote, by measures which I have seen adopted, the welfare and advantage, the liberty and prosperity, of my country; and in doing so, I have met with many warmly attached and excellent friends—men of a nature as noble as that of any men who have ever taken part in public life—and I have this satisfaction, that whatever errors I may have committed, whatever mistakes I may have made, I have always endeavoured to satisfy those friends and my own conscience, and therefore I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the result at which I have arrived, even if that result should be forever to exclude me from any voice in the management of public affairs. Whatever, therefore, may be the result of the motion of the hon. baronet opposite (Sir Bulwer Lytton), I have no desire that it should be postponed, and I am most willing that he should have the fullest opportunity of making any charge against me which he may think necessary in support of the views which he entertains. To these observations I can only add, that I am satisfied to abide by the decision of the House.”

This reply was precisely of that kind which never fails to irritate an Opposition. It was mean, it was shifty, and it was wretchedly feeble. Lord John Russell implied that he had not so much retired from office owing to the hostile feeling of the country, as he had been deserted by certain of his own followers. His fortunes had wavered, and some of his friends had forsaken him. Yet this was far from being the true story. He had been deserted because he had been guilty of gross inconsistency and a culpable concealment of policy. So childish an evasion of the real charge did not blind the House, and a somewhat warm and personal debate ensued

—one of those debates which parliament loves, full of keen invective, acrid recriminations and accusations, as bitterly directed as they are venomously refuted. Sir Bulwer Lytton congratulated the country on the victory it had achieved; with much eloquence and pointed sarcasm he exposed the inconsistencies of the late minister's diplomatic and political efforts, "who lately suppressed his sentiments lest he should damage his government, while a few months ago he had overturned a government rather than suppress his sentiments." At last the nation had got rid of a statesman "in whom Russia sees an excuse, Austria a justification, France a dissentient from her policy, and England the condemnation of her war." Sir Bulwer then taunted the cabinet for being divided, and severely animadverted upon the conduct of the prime minister, who had accepted office with a distinct declaration of his intention to carry on the foreign policy of Lord Aberdeen, whilst he rejected proposals which that policy would certainly have accepted. Mr. Bouverie, the vice-president of the board of trade, then, amid shouts of laughter, spoke in the highest terms of "the integrity, the honour, and the sagacity" of Lord John Russell, though at the same time he felt bound to confess that he was disposed to question his lordship's judgment. Nor was the laughter checked when Mr. Bouverie proceeded to explain the circumstances under which, though most unwillingly, he had conveyed the information to Lord John of the impression felt by many of his colleagues that they would not oppose the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton. Lord Palmerston, in a speech which exhibited more temper than was usually his custom, refuted all the accusations brought forward by Sir Bulwer, and boisterously denied that there was any division of opinion in the cabinet on the subject of the war.

Mr. Disraeli now rose up (July 16, 1855). After a few remarks upon the "common-place bluster" of Lord Palmerston, he said,

"Let me remind the House of the gravity of the subject which is now under their consideration. Let me remind the House of the peculiar circumstances that have attended all the negotiations which have either preceded this war or have occurred in its progress. What happened at the beginning of the last session of parliament? When we were discussing in the House papers which were laid upon the table, who was it that expressed, on the part of the government, their determination to uphold the interests of this country and their want of confidence in the conduct of Russia? Is it not a fact that it was the noble lord, recently the secretary of state for the colonies, who rose in his place and, echoing the feelings of the House and the country, denounced the emperor and minister of Russia as men guilty of false and fraudulent conduct, amid the cheers of the House? And what occurred? Why, there came out an article in a foreign newspaper referring to transactions which had been concealed from this House; and in a few days the House was favoured with the most singular revelations which probably were ever made with regard to the diplomatic management of our affairs. What has happened this year? The same minister comes down to the table and makes a speech exciting the passions of the country, in order to carry on this war with effect. And what is the consequence? Again a foreign document appears, the circular of the Austrian minister, referring to circumstances which were again concealed from the House of Commons, and were most antagonistic to an effective prosecution of the war. Is not this a remarkable coincidence? Last year's speech of the noble lord brings out a secret and confidential correspondence which was carried on by many members of the present cabinet, and in which they addressed the Emperor of Russia in a tone very different from that which they used towards him in this House. This year's speech of the noble lord brings forward a circular of the Austrian minister, and we find that at

the very time the House was addressed by these ministers in a tone which would induce the belief they were ready to embark in an internecine struggle, these very ministers were in secret and confidential communication with Austria, in order to recommend and carry through parliament an arrangement totally opposed to the policy which in this House they recommended. Are not these grave circumstances? Is there not some lingering self-respect in the House of Commons which will not allow such circumstances to pass unnoticed, uncriticised, and unchallenged?"

He declined, continued the speaker, to make an attack upon an individual member of the government; for he held the whole cabinet responsible for the conduct of the late envoy. There was no member of the cabinet who was not identified with the policy of Lord John Russell. He believed, and he did not make the statement without due authority, that the views which that noble lord brought from Vienna were favourably received, not merely by a majority, but by the whole of the cabinet; and that nothing but circumstances which ministers did not anticipate, and difficulties which suddenly arose, prevented the plan of the late plenipotentiary being cordially and unanimously adopted. He had told the prime minister some weeks ago that they were only in the ante-chamber of discussion, and his lordship had then tried to stop the progress of discussion. What had since occurred? Every day and every hour had brought fresh information and fresh instances which required discussion; from that moment to the present they had been discussing those affairs, and should continue to discuss them as long as the conduct of the government was veiled in that thick cloud of ambiguity and doubt which now pervaded the political atmosphere.

"The House will therefore see," continued Mr. Disraeli, "that we have to consider a subject of vast importance. The sacrifice

has been great which has prevented our coming to a vote to-night to decide the fate of the cabinet. The noble lord (Palmerston) takes credit to himself, because when his noble friend offered his resignation and he accepted it, although he accepted it he told his noble friend he was ready to stand or fall by him.* I admire friends and colleagues who are ready to stand or fall by one another; but then after such bold and unequivocal declarations of respect and affection, one might wish to see the act follow the word. But upon this occasion it does not seem that the noble lord either stood or fell by his friend. The noble lord is neither standing nor falling; but on the contrary, he has remained sitting on the Treasury bench. How is the knot to be unravelled? The noble viscount presses the hand of the noble lord; he vows eternal devotion to him; he says we are in the same boat—we shall share the same fate therefore; and in a spirit of political justice and generous partizanship, which would be admirable if it were sincere, says, 'One member of a firm cannot be bankrupt alone according to the laws either of England or of honour, and we stand or fall together.' But in the meantime there are means by which the first minister, who is excessively dexterous and adroit, can extricate himself from the difficult position in which he finds himself pledged to stand or fall with the noble lord, the member for the city of London. It requires the talent of a vice-president of the board of trade—a divinity in that form and inspired by that spirit—to disentangle a knot of such difficulty and delicacy as the one which the noble viscount has encountered. The pro-

* "We did not sacrifice my noble friend. I did decline to receive his offer of resignation made upon the Monday; and even on the Thursday when he told me, 'I have made up my mind to resign my situation,' I replied that it was for him to judge—that the question had assumed a shape so peculiarly personal to himself that I could not pretend to give him my advice as to the course he should pursue; but this I said to him, that if upon reflection he thought it would be better for him to stay in, I should be prepared to face the motion of the hon. baronet opposite with the government as it then stood, and that I should stand up and vindicate the conduct that he was ready to adopt."—*House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, July 16, 1855.*

cess seems to have been successful. I listened to the vice-president of the board of trade with the feeling which became the occasion. I have not the honour of being a friend of the noble lord, the member for London; but I appreciate, I hope, his high qualities in common with the vice-president of the board of trade. I cannot, I confess, therefore fully comprehend the position of the vice-president of the board of trade in this case as not only the friend, but the devoted friend and political admirer of the noble lord. I can only very distantly approximate to the nature of his feelings; but I must frankly admit—and the House recognizes, I am sure—the agony and emotion which he must have undergone before he arrived at the result which he felt to be inevitable. There have been many instances of friends and friendships. Friendship is the gift of the gods, and the most precious boon to man. It has long occupied the thought and consideration of essayists and philosophers; there have been more analyses of the elements of the different degrees of friendship than of any other quality granted to sustain and solace humanity. There, for instance, is the devoted friend who stands or falls by one like the noble lord, the first lord of the Treasury. But there is also another kind of friend immortalized by an epithet which should not be mentioned to ‘ears polite.’ We all know that friend. It was, I believe, a brilliant ornament of this House who described that kind of friend; and I must say that, although as the devoted friend the prime minister must after to-night be allowed to take the highest position, still for a friend of the other description, a friend who is not a very bad-natured friend (the House will know exactly the friend I mean), I say commend me to the right hon. gentleman, the vice-president of the board of trade.”

Mr. Disraeli then commented severely upon the mysterious withdrawal of Lord John Russell from office so as to evade all public discussion upon his conduct,

and upon the tone of Lord Palmerston in replying to the strictures of the House.* “For a person of this description,” cried Mr. Disraeli, referring to Lord John Russell, “with such accumulated responsibility, having his conduct challenged by the House—and the first minister of the crown, his colleague having pledged himself to a full discussion, and to stand or fall by the verdict of the House of Commons—for such a man to withdraw from the public service, evade all discussion, and then for the first minister to get up and jocosely tell us it is ‘much ado about nothing,’ is really more intolerable than trifling. It is not a manner in which questions of this kind should be met—it is not a tone which should be adopted—this patrician bullying of the Treasury bench. It may be assumed upon the discussion of a private bill, or on some petty struggle of party which may be a triumph to-night and be forgotten to-morrow; but when we are discussing a question involving the policy of one of the greatest nations of the world—the policy of peace or war, which brings under consideration the conduct of camps and conquerors—when we have before us the behaviour of a statesman whose mind and conduct have given colour and form to the political history of this country for a quarter of a century—it is not fitting that the noble lord, the first minister of the crown, should rise and attempt to stop discussion by language addressed to my hon. friend (Sir Bulwer Lytton), which I will not use an unparliamentary epithet to describe, but certainly not language which I expected from one who is not only the leader of the House of Commons, which is an accident of life, but is also a gentleman.”

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to assert, amid cries of denial from the Treasury bench, that had it not been for France refusing to entertain the proposals of Aus-

* Lord Palmerston had said that the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton was “Much ado about Nothing;” Sir Bulwer wittily retorted, that he believed “Much ado about Nothing” came after the “Comedy of Errors.”

tria, the cabinet would have accepted the terms brought from Vienna. It was all very well, he sneered, to cry No, no! but would any minister rise and speak upon the subject and refute his facts? No, no! would not do. He again asserted, that if it had not been for the refusal of the Emperor of the French to accept the course suggested by Austria, the proposals brought back from Vienna would have been entertained, and would, if possible, have been carried through parliament.

"Admitting, then," he continued, "the inference to be a just one, what are we to think of this triumphant war minister—this minister who is only made a minister because he can carry on the war with great skill—what can we think of his conduct to his late colleague, the right hon. baronet the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) and his friends? Did you, or did you not, approve of the project which the noble lord the member for the city of London brought over? And this is a subject on which we ought not to be content with any superficial reply. It is not enough for a minister to get up and say, 'We did not approve that project, though there might be some points upon which we agreed.' Is it, or is it not the fact, that the noble lord the member for the city of London had communicated with his colleagues—other colleagues than those whose names appear in the papers before the House? Did he not communicate the outline and spirit of the policy which was developing under his auspices at Vienna, and did he, I ask, receive any discouraging reply? Is there not, on the contrary, reason to believe that he did communicate it, and did not receive any discouragement. Did the noble lord the member for the city of London, when he arrived in England, expect, and had he reason to expect, that there was a fair chance of those propositions being acceded to and carried into effect? I beg the attention of the House to this. Is it a fact, or is it not a fact, that the French minister communicated with the

authorities at Paris while he was at Vienna; that he received a reply which was favourable to those propositions; that that reply was communicated to the noble lord, the member for the city of London; that the noble lord in consequence communicated with his colleagues; and that, in fact, there was—not a compact or a convention, but a general understanding for a brief space, even between both governments, that those terms would have been accepted? Is it, or is it not a fact, that there was at last a day—I believe a much longer period—when those terms were cordially accepted by the government in London, and when the noble lord accepted them? [To this Lord Palmerston replied, "No!"]

"Very well," continued Mr. Disraeli, "I remember six weeks ago making a speech about ambiguous language and uncertain conduct, and I then had the same 'No!' from that same bench. I do not know whether the present session of parliament will last six weeks longer; but if it do, I believe that I shall find that the remarks which I am now making, and which are received so sceptically from a quarter—although a limited quarter—in this House, will be acknowledged by the great majority of this House to be authentic truth. All I can say is, that I make the statement upon information which I believe to be of the highest authenticity. I do not want it to be more esteemed than any information which I give upon my own personal authority, but I express my profound conviction of its truth. And now we are told that this is 'much ado about nothing!' Two years ago you were involved in diplomatic negotiations upon a most important subject. If any member of this House at that time asked a question, he was told, 'Do not press it, you will embarrass our diplomacy.' Honourable gentlemen yielded, and what did that abstinence on the part of the House of Commons end in? In the greatest diplomatic defeat on record. Another year came,

and you were involved, not in diplomacy, but in war. If a gentleman rose then in the House to ask a question, he was told, 'Silence! say not a word; the enemy will know our plans; you are placing obstacles in the way of our vigorous prosecution of the war.' And what did that end in? In the most disastrous war ever conducted! Now a third year has come, and the third session is about to expire. Nearly at its termination, when all are silent, including those who think there is no greater object in life than parliamentary success, and that a strong government is the government which can command a parliamentary majority—a foreign document appears; the mind of the country is agitated at a few expressions in that foreign document, and a question is asked in the House of Commons. Doubt and distress pervade the land, and a belief exists that there is guilt in the management of our affairs; for I call it guilt—I call it guilt to come down to this place as a minister, to a free House of Commons, and to give reasons for your policy which are totally at variance with your secret instructions to your minister abroad. That single foreign document appears; the people are agitated; they think; they talk; their representatives in this House ask questions. What happens? The foremost of your statesmen dare not meet the controversy which such questions provoke. He mysteriously disappears. With the reputation of a quarter of a century, a man who has reformed parliament, who, as he has told us to-night, and often before, is the successful champion of civil and religious liberty, in the cause and name of which he has accomplished great triumphs—he who has met the giants of debate; he who has crossed his rapier with Canning, and even for a term shared the great respect and reputation which this country accords to its foremost men with no less a person than Sir Robert Peel—he dare not meet the debate. But who dares meet it? The first minister of the crown, who has addressed this House

to-night in accents and in language utterly unworthy of his position, and utterly unworthy of the occasion, and who has shown to me to-night, by his language and by the tone of his mind, that if the honour and interests of the country be any longer intrusted to his care, the first will be degraded, and the last, I believe, will be betrayed."

The government, as the leader of the Opposition had asserted, "dared not meet the debate;" and after lame apologies from Sir George Grey and Mr. Gladstone, the motion of Sir Bulwer Lytton was withdrawn.

The House, however, had not heard the last of ministerial mismanagement during the Crimean war. The Sebastopol committee had concluded its labours; and in another portion of this work we have alluded to the censure passed upon the Aberdeen government, which fittingly ended the report. On the Blue Book coming into the hands of members, Mr. Roebuck moved the following resolution:—"That this House, deeply lamenting the sufferings of our army during the winter campaign in the Crimea, and coinciding with the resolution of their committee that the conduct of the administration was the first and chief cause of the calamities which befell that army, do hereby visit with severe reprehension every member of that cabinet whose counsels led to such disastrous results." The disclosures attendant upon this inquiry of civil incapacity and military fortitude led to a debate which lasted two nights. In vain refutation and palliation endeavoured to meet the charges and parry the attacks of the Opposition; the case against the late cabinet was so strong as practically to be unanswerable. "It is now manifest," concluded Mr. Roebuck, after recapitulating all the facts with which we are familiar as to the courage and endurance of the soldiery, and the inertness and incompetence of Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues—"It is now manifest that the administration which I wish to censure have been guilty of wrong; and whether

the result of carrying my resolution be to transfer power from one to the other side of the House, is to me a matter of total indifference. All that I wish for is justice; all that I desire is to see that we shall never again be in the position of calling on a body of our brave fellow-countrymen, and at the same time sit here night after night faced by a body of men by whose supineness and errors they are being consigned to an untimely grave. In this spirit I have moved the resolution which I now, sir, place in your hands. I am aware that I have inadequately performed the duty which I have undertaken; but I have done so to the best of my ability, and I now leave the question to the decision of the House."

By certain members the motion of Mr. Roebuck was considered to wear an aspect of vindictive personality; and the previous question* was moved by General Peel, and seconded by Lord Robert Cecil. On the second night of the debate Mr. Disraeli addressed the House (July 19, 1855). He could not, he began, agree to give a vote upon a question which presented itself in so ambiguous and unsatisfactory a state as the present, without attempting to explain the motives which induced him to take the course which he felt it his duty to adopt. They had heard much in the course of the discussion of party motions, party feelings, and party objects; but if he were to choose a motion which would be convenient to party objects and

which would strengthen the Opposition, it would be the course about to be adopted that night by the government, and it would be the motion ministers were about to support. A vote of censure upon the government had been moved, and how had it been met? "It is met," answered Mr. Disraeli, "by the government by a form of the House, which practically and literally means that the House declines to express either confidence or want of confidence in the government. When a motion of a want of confidence or of censure is brought forward against the government, their defence is simply to ask the House only to decide not to proceed with the controversy. Now, I think the Opposition might fairly be satisfied with such a result; and when taunted with party objects and party motives, it appears to me if we had only party objects in view we need not have prolonged this debate, but might have joined with the noble lord at the head of the government in supporting the hon. and gallant member for Huntingdon (General Peel) who moves the 'previous question,' and have been satisfied, in the present temper of the country upon this question, that when a vote of want of confidence or of censure (adopting the description of the noble lord) is brought forward he, confident in himself and his powers, should deem he is doing everything necessary to vindicate his policy when he entreats the House of Commons to express no opinion at all upon it. But it appears to me that we have something to consider beyond the convenience of a ministry or of an opposition. . . . Let us remember what has been the cause of this motion. A few months ago a committee was appointed, by an immense majority of this House, to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol. What was the cause of the appointment of that committee? Was it the feeling of this House? No! It was the feeling of the country. We know that the battle of Inkerman has been termed the soldiers' battle; the

* The "previous question," as it is called, is an ingenious method of avoiding a vote upon any question that has been proposed. At the close of a debate, or when there is no debate, the Speaker "puts the question," without any direction from the House; but by a motion for the previous question this act of the Speaker may be intercepted. The words of this motion are, "that that question"—i.e., the proposed question—"be now put." If the previous question be negatived, the House thereby decides that the principal question to which it relates shall not be put from the chair at that time. If, however, it be carried, the principal question is accordingly put from the chair without further debate. Sir Harry Vane is said to be the first contriver of the previous question; hence a member in the reign of Charles the Second said in debate, "This previous question is like the image of the inventor—a perpetual disturbance." In a Committee of the House there can be no previous question; but if it be wished to avoid the question, it is usual to move that "the Chairman do leave the chair."

Sebastopol committee was the people's committee. After a protracted investigation, conducted by some of the most distinguished men in this House, a report has been presented, and a resolution is now proposed by the chairman of that committee, asking the House to coincide with the opinion of the committee in its chief finding. I do not now want to argue that the chief finding is just or unjust, politic or impolitic; but I think the country has a right to call upon this House to express an opinion one way or the other upon that issue. The tone which the noble lord at the head of the government has adopted is most singular, most remarkable, and in my opinion most unauthorized by what has occurred. The noble lord has taken the course of decrying the committee, of denying the value of its researches and the truth of its conclusions. . . . If the noble lord says these statements are not true, I ask, ought he to take refuge in the 'previous question?' Ought not the noble lord for the sake of his own honour, as an act of duty towards this House and the country, to come forward and say, 'The labours of your famous Sebastopol committee are superficial; the committee have conducted their investigations in a spirit not worthy of the occasion; they have misled and they are misleading the people. But I will not submit to have the authority of the government injured by their unfounded report; I will vindicate my policy and the character of public men; I will prove in the face of this House that their assertions are without foundation, that their recommendations have no authority; and at this moment when the country is engaged in a great struggle—when, therefore, confidence in the government is an inestimable treasure, and you ought not, without overwhelming evidence, to have recourse to a vote of censure—I call upon you to declare that this committee on the state of the army before Sebastopol has not done its duty, but has performed it in a crude and fraudulent spirit; it has misled

the country and poisoned the public mind; and I call upon you to come forward and support the authority of the queen's government.' The whole course of the noble lord's observations renders it his duty to take such a proceeding. He says that this is a party motion—a party motion brought forward by whom? by a gentleman who, when I six weeks ago brought forward a motion which the noble lord said struck at the existence of his government, voted in favour of the noble lord! . . . If I wished only for a party success, I should be content that the House should vote for the 'previous question,' and I should say, 'Here is a government against whom a vote of censure is moved, glad to shield themselves under a formal motion in order to evade the opinion of the House.' As a mere partizan that would be a sufficient triumph. But I did not, sir, even suppose that the motion of the hon. and gallant member for Huntingdon would ever seriously have to be put from the chair. I have frequently, on several great questions, found the 'previous question' launched, but have seldom seen it arrive at the port to which it was directed; and I thought that the gravity and reality of the issue in the present case rendered it impossible that any one would seek shelter under such a formal motion, but that all, whatever their convictions might be as to the real question, would desire that the opinion of the House should be taken on the real question. I thought that the noble lord would be among the first to come forward and request the hon. and gallant general not to embarrass the House, or to place any obstacle in the way of an expression of its opinion, by moving the 'previous question,' which after two nights' debate would but leave the matter where it was before, and would not strengthen the government even in the opinion of their most sanguine supporters, but would disappoint the country and waste the time of the House."

Mr. Disraeli, after commenting upon the insufficient preparations being made for

carrying on the war, alluded to the statement brought forward by ministers, that these discussions would have an ill effect upon France. He thus concluded:—

“Frequent allusions have been made to the influence which anything that passes in this House may have upon our relations with France. Now, if every time that the people of this country complain of the mismanagement of their affairs—if upon every occasion when they appeal to their representatives for redress on account of that mismanagement—a minister is to rise and tell them that they can have no redress, and that they must not even speak upon the subject, because it may involve us in our relations with our allies, rest assured that any minister or any public man who pursues that course is doing more to endanger the alliance between England and France than by any free criticism which may be expressed in this House, which, if true, will in the long run be listened to with respect, and which, if not founded on truth, will easily be confuted. Let the suspicion once be prevalent that the grievances of the people as to the administration of their affairs in regard to this war are never in their own House to be mentioned on account of the alleged fear of endangering our alliance, and you are shaking that alliance to its centre, and changing the cordial and sympathetic sentiments which now prevail between the two countries into feelings of distrust, of jealousy, and suspicion. Sir, the division is now about to be called, and I blush to recollect the issue which is at stake. After two nights’ discussion in this House, after the laborious efforts for months of the committee upon a most important subject, with some of our most eminent statesmen appealing to the House for justice and frankness in our conduct, and with the whole country looking with interest to our decision to-night, we are coming to a vote which can confer honour and credit upon no body of men, and no individual member of this assembly.” After a short reply from Mr. Roebuck, the House divided upon the

previous question—Ayes, 182; Noes, 289; majority 107.

Parliament was prorogued by commission August 14, 1855, and a session which had chiefly been spent by the Opposition in exposing the blunders of the government, and by ministers in endeavouring to refute their attacks, came to an end.

Meanwhile—thanks to the ardour of our troops—the war had been pushed vigorously on. In the royal speech proroguing parliament the commissioners said, “Her Majesty has commanded us to say that she has seen with sincere regret that the endeavours which, in conjunction with her ally the Emperor of the French, she made at the recent conferences at Vienna to bring the war to a conclusion on conditions consistent with the honour of the allies and the future security of Europe have proved ineffectual; but those endeavours having failed, no other course is left to Her Majesty but to prosecute the war with all possible vigour. Her Majesty relying upon the support of parliament, upon the manly spirit and patriotism of her people, upon the never-failing courage of her army and navy, whose patience under suffering and whose endurance Her Majesty has witnessed with admiration, upon the steadfast fidelity of her allies, and, above all, upon the justice of her cause, humbly puts her trust in the Almighty Disposer of events for such an issue of the great contest in which she is engaged as may secure to Europe the blessings of a firm and lasting peace.”

For this issue the country had to wait some months. Into the details of the campaign that followed upon the breaking off of the negotiations at Vienna, it is beyond our province to enter. We shall but touch upon them, so as to elucidate the comments subsequently made by the subject of this political biography. Lord Raglan had been succeeded as commander-in-chief by General Simpson, and the appointment only tended to display how infinitely superior in military discipline and foresight had been

the general's predecessor. Early in August the Russians made a desperate attempt to raise the siege of Sebastopol, but, thanks chiefly to the valour of the Sardinian contingent, the besieged were repulsed with grave loss. The allies had drawn their lines nearer and nearer to the doomed city, and it soon became certain that the fate of Sebastopol was only a question of days. The capture of the Malakoff by the French, and the storming of the Redan by the English, though the battery was shortly afterwards retaken by the Russians, decided Prince Gortschakoff to abandon the city. Under cover of the darkness of the night the prince withdrew his troops, and then fired the town which had so long resisted the efforts of the allies. "It is not Sebastopol," wrote the Russian commander, "which we have left to them, but the burning ruins of the town which we ourselves set fire to; having maintained the honour of the defence in such a manner that our great grandchildren may recall with pride the remembrance of it, and send it on to all posterity." As a set-off to this victory, Kars, which had been brilliantly defended against tremendous odds by Colonel Fenwick Williams, was forced by famine at last to surrender. The gallant colonel had to contend against two enemies; he had to contend against the Russians, and at the same time against official jealousies and the want of energy and foresight of the government. Hopes of peace were now entertained, which happily were soon realized. Austria again stepped in to use her good offices, and they were eagerly listened to. Russia was anxious to obtain peace, provided her national honour did not suffer. France had had enough of war, and was desirous of developing the domestic reforms she had instituted. England was alone both willing and prepared to fight to the bitter end, if necessary; though she would not be vindictive if satisfactory terms were laid before her. The Congress of Paris began its labours late in February, and on March 30, 1856, the treaty of Paris

was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the great powers. The chief articles of the treaty were as follows:—

Russia engaged to restore the town and citadel of Kars to the Sultan, as well as the other parts of the Ottoman territory of which the Russian troops were in possession. Sebastopol and all other places captured by the allies were, in like turn, to be handed over to Russia. The Porte was to participate in the advantages of the public law and system of Europe. The independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire were to be respected by the powers; any violation of such independence was to be looked upon by them as a question of general interest. The condition of the Christian population of the Ottoman empire was to be ameliorated. The Black Sea was neutralized; the Sultan and the Czar engaging to maintain no military-maritime arsenals in its waters. The navigation of the Danube was thrown open. The frontier of Bessarabia was to be rectified, and the territory ceded by Russia to be annexed to Moldavia under the suzerainty of the Porte. Moldavia and Wallachia were to continue under the suzerainty of the Porte, and to enjoy all their past privileges and immunities. The Sultan had power to prevent ships of war of foreign powers from entering the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, so long as he was at peace. These were the chief clauses in the treaty of Paris. By a subsequent tripartite treaty (April 15, 1856) between England, France, and Austria, the independence and integrity of the Ottoman empire were specially guaranteed.

These conditions naturally came under the notice of parliament. The Houses assembled January 31, 1856, and the royal speech was at once subjected to the customary criticism. Her Majesty had said, "Since the close of the last session of parliament the arms of the allies have achieved a signal and important success. Sebastopol, the great stronghold of Russia in the Black Sea, has yielded to the per-

severing constancy and to the daring bravery of the allied forces. The naval and military preparations for the ensuing year have necessarily occupied my serious attention; but while determined to omit no effort which could give vigour to the operations of the war, I have deemed it my duty not to decline any overtures which might reasonably afford a prospect of a safe and honourable peace. Accordingly, when the Emperor of Austria lately offered to myself and to my august ally, the Emperor of the French, to employ his good offices with the Emperor of Russia, with a view to endeavour to bring about an amicable adjustment of the matters at issue between the contending powers, I consented, in concert with my allies, to accept the offer thus made, and I have the satisfaction to inform you that certain conditions have been agreed upon, which I hope may prove the foundation of a general treaty of peace. Negotiations for such a treaty will shortly be opened at Paris. In conducting those negotiations I shall be careful not to lose sight of the objects for which the war was undertaken; and I shall deem it right in no degree to relax my naval and military preparations until a satisfactory treaty of peace shall be concluded."

After the mover and seconder of the address had indulged in the platitudes and prize-essay reflections usually attendant upon these parliamentary efforts, Mr. Disraeli rose up. He expressed his satisfaction that Her Majesty should have acceded to conditions which might prove "the foundation of a safe and honourable peace," and that in spite of these prospects, the objects of the war would not be lost sight of. He was unable to criticise the terms of peace, for no authentic information on the subject was before him; but he hoped that, under these circumstances, the House would exercise "that prudent but high-spirited reserve which, while it shrinks from embarrassing a minister on whom is about to devolve the fulfilment of so difficult a duty, will at the same time watch with the utmost vigilance

—I will not say suspicion—the course of all his proceedings." Then the speaker alluded to a feeling which was somewhat prevalent. To a certain section in the country the hope of peace was not welcome. England was now perfectly prepared to sustain a long war; she was anxious to atone for many of the blunders of the past, and she was burning to re-assert her military supremacy in the eyes of Europe. War in order to obtain definite political results and war simply to pander to the conceit of national vanity were two very different objects, and Mr. Disraeli—whom his enemies have decried as the apostle of "Jingoism"—very properly rebuked this empty and culpable pride. Besides, he failed to see that the lustre of the British arms had been dimmed. "We are told," he said, "that although we may have attained the objects for which we embarked in war, still it is expedient that the war should be continued, in order to sustain or to increase the lustre of the arms of England; or rather, perhaps, because in the struggle that may, and which, I trust, will soon cease, we have not achieved exploits so striking as those which illustrate some portions of our history. Now, sir, the abstract principle that we ought to continue a war, after having attained its objects, merely to gratify the vanity or to support the reputation of a community is, in my opinion, one of a very questionable character; but I deny that in our present circumstances any application of that principle is possible. I, for one, will never admit that the lustre of our arms has been tarnished. It is not easy to find words to express the admiration which all must feel for the great qualities which have been exhibited by our troops throughout this struggle. It is not easy to describe the vast resources which we have at our disposal, and the energy which we have already displayed. I lay down as a principle, that the leading powers of Europe should never engage in a war unless they are certain and predetermined to achieve victories which may figure among what are

called the decisive battles of the world, is really one of the most monstrous propositions that was ever addressed to the intelligence of a nation. To suppose, for example, that France or England is never to go to war unless she can be certain of achieving victories like Rocroi or Blenheim, Austerlitz or Waterloo, is totally to misunderstand the object for which great states go to war. Instead of their being the vindicators of public law and the conservators of public order, you degrade them into the gladiators of history, and their brilliant achievements would only be crimes which might accomplish the ruin of this country. Therefore, I cannot at all admit that the principle that we ought to continue this war, in order to obtain extraordinary results, is one which we ought at all to sanction; and I am afraid that those in this country who fall into this fallacy are too much induced to do so by the taunts of foreign critics. But the very persons who indulge in those taunts are themselves the persons most persuaded of the substantial increase of the power of England. If you look to the authors of those statements respecting the decline of the prestige of England—I will not inquire who or where they may be, whether they are journalists who have become statesmen, or statesmen who have become journalists—you will generally find that they are the persons who are most competent to estimate the importance of England, and who are really the least inclined to undervalue it. They play upon the too easily excited susceptibility of the people of this country; and I will say of them, as was said of a great sceptic, that when they attempt to depreciate our achievements and our resources, they really ‘tremble while they sneer.’” Mr. Disraeli concluded by pronouncing a brief but high eulogy upon the defenders of Kars, and regretted that no mention of their gallant conduct had been inserted in the speech from the throne.

The question of the decline and fall of Kars soon became a matter for parlia-

mentary inquiry. It was impossible that a frontier town like Kars, the very key of the Bosphorus on the Asiatic side, should have been allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy, owing to the neglect of the government, without the circumstance leading to a debate in the House of Commons. It was said that had Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our ambassador at Constantinople, paid proper attention to the despatches of Colonel Williams, had troops been marched to the assistance of the besieged, had money been sent to furnish the town with provisions, had, in fact, ministers acted with vigour and prudence, Kars would not have fallen a prey to the Russian arms. These reflections were embodied in the following resolution moved by Mr. Whiteside (April 28, 1856)—“That while this House feels it to be its duty to express its admiration of the gallantry of the Turkish soldiery, and of the devotion of the British officers at the siege of Kars, it feels it to be equally a duty to express its conviction that the capitulation of that fortress, and the surrender of the army which defended it, thereby endangering the safety of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, were in a great measure owing to the want of foresight and energy on the part of Her Majesty’s administration.” A three nights’ debate showed the interest taken by the House in the question. The Opposition abused Lord Stratford for not having supported Colonel Williams, abused Lord Panmure for his direction of the war department, and abused Lord Clarendon for his management of foreign affairs. The root of Russian power, as opposed to England’s Indian empire and to Asiatic Turkey, lay in Georgia; and it was therefore the duty of a British minister, when war broke out between Russia and Turkey, to assist the latter at the right time and with the right means. Why had not ministers asked for the money—for the £50,000 or £100,000—that would have saved Kars? Why had those unnecessary delays been created, which had prevented Omar Pasha from

entering upon the expedition which would have resulted in the relief of Kars? On the other hand, the government declared that to have withdrawn the troops from before Sebastopol to secure a merely secondary object—the safety of Kars—would have been highly impolitic in a strategical point of view; whilst, as to the political point of view, the fate of Kars had been utterly without influence on the treaty of peace. The object of the war was not to defend India against a Russian attack, but for European interests alone, totally unconnected with those of our colonies. It was a matter for regret that Lord Stratford, through pressure of business, should have omitted to answer Colonel Williams' despatches; but the ambassador had done all that it was possible for him to perform. Kars fell from famine; but if the pasha of Erzeroum had done his duty, the town would have been well supplied with provisions. There was no occasion for such a vote as that proposed by Mr. Whiteside.

Mr. Disraeli, on the third night (May 1, 1856), addressed the House. He vindicated those who supported the resolution from the charge of being animated by factious opposition. A great war had just been terminated, and an important peace had just been concluded. During that space of time an event had occurred which had exerted a powerful influence on public affairs, and which, even if it had not exerted that influence, had been attended with circumstances which enlisted the deepest sympathy of the people of the country. There had been a heroic exhibition of all those virtues and qualities which Englishmen appreciated and honoured; there was a prevalent belief that men distinguished by all those qualities and virtues had been deserted by the government; and now, after a wise forbearance, due to the state of the country and to the embarrassing duties of the administration, a forbearance which reflected credit on the House, the time had arrived to discuss the question which for so long a period had touched

the hearts and occupied the hearths of the whole country. There was nothing factious, or sordid, or selfish in such discussion. Whatever might be the decision at which the House arrived, was there a man in the country who did not feel that the siege and fall of Kars ought to be the subject of parliamentary discussion?

"I think," continued Mr. Disraeli, proceeding to lay down the rules which guided him and his followers in their antagonism to ministers—"I think it becomes the House of Commons to have some more clear idea of the position of an Opposition in this country, and of the duties it has to fulfil, than appears to be prevalent among some hon. gentlemen, and even right hon. gentlemen on the ministerial bench. It appears to me that the first duty of an Opposition is to vindicate their principles whenever they deem it necessary and convenient, and to assert them without the slightest reference to what may be the consequences of a division. I think, in the second place, that it is the paramount and peremptory duty of an Opposition to offer its criticisms on public affairs when they think the conduct of the ministry demands observation, without the slightest reference to the consequences of a division. If the duty of an Opposition is only to be tested by the success which upsets a ministry, it is very easy to see that the sphere of opposition must become very limited; and no doubt that is a theory very agreeable to a ministry, from whatever party selected. To say that opposition is only to be justified by a division sufficiently successful to upset a ministry,* is to lower political conduct to a selfish and sordid standard. It is telling the people of this country that their parliament is not to be an assembly where the relative merits of different principles of government are to be discussed and debated, where the pulse of the nation is to be felt, and where even the passions of the people are to be represented; but that it is to be

* The motion of Mr. Whiteside had been described as "simply an attempt to upset the ministry."

a clever, well-organized, mechanical assembly, where nothing is to be considered but selfish consequences and the mere personal ambition of the individuals who are fortunate enough to obtain a seat in it, and where the possession of power and the disposition of patronage are to be, in fact, the sole objects held in view. It is not so that I have understood the character of parliament; it is not so that I have conceived the duties of opposition. There is a ready answer for a minister to a captious and factious opposition. He will appeal, and generally speaking, not without success, to the independent feeling of this House; and if he is not supported here, he will appeal without fear to the country. But so long as we represent—whether our opinions be erroneous or not—a great force of public opinion on any question which may be brought forward, it is our duty to express it, and to invite discussion upon it; so long as we vindicate, though we be a minority—and it is the necessary consequence of our parliamentary system that an Opposition should be a minority—the principles of government and the policy which we think right, we are fulfilling our duty; and not all the swagger of a minister, not all the flippant taunts of his followers, will deter us from taking that course, which we believe to be founded on right and justice. Nor will any majority, however accidentally gained, deprive discussion of its consequences, nor prevent the force of truth—if truth be on the side of our opinions—ultimately prevailing.”

Mr. Disraeli then discussed the conduct of the ambassador at Constantinople, and dealt with his negligence more mercifully than had other members in the course of debate. He did not consider that the conduct of Lord Stratford was a principal element in the subject. When the fall of Kars was first known in the country there was, he said, undoubtedly an instantaneous feeling of sorrow and indignation in the public mind. He hardly ever remembered an occasion when their troops had not been

engaged, and when their own immediate interests were not affected, on which the feeling excited was so deep, so prompt, and so instantaneous. What happened? Mysterious whispers were heard from those who knew it was impossible to deny the nature and consequences of the catastrophe, and who, feeling how disgraceful and injurious the event must be to the government, were anxious to palliate it as much as possible. It was darkly said, that if the truth were only known, the government would be found perfectly blameless, and that there was another influence at work which had produced all the mischief. In a considerable time, in a most powerful and consistent manner, by the most able machinery, the public mind was kept quiet by the intimation that there would at last be a revelation as to the criminal influences which had caused the sad disaster; but that the country must wait for a time before the scapegoat could be indicated. At last the fact was published. Then every means which power, ingenuity, and some feeling of despair could command, was set to work to prove that it was the ambassador at Constantinople who was the real cause of the disaster. Numerous despatches addressed to the ambassador by Colonel Williams had remained unanswered, and the people of England were asked whether an ambassador who left numerous despatches unanswered on so important a subject had not betrayed his country? In that way public indignation had been excited against Lord Stratford, and there was one of those strong but premature verdicts pronounced against the ambassador, which are often as unjust as they are precipitate. He had not risen, continued Mr. Disraeli, to defend the conduct of Lord Stratford, because Mr. Whiteside had not brought the case of the ambassador before the House. The conduct of Lord Stratford, as shown by the documents placed by the government on the table, was indefensible. With that, however, he had nothing to do. If the ambassador had sinned so grievously

and had not been recalled, the government were alone responsible for his conduct. "Why, sir," cried Mr. Disraeli, laying down one of those constitutional maxims upon which he always acted—"why, sir, if there are any principles which ought to regulate us in our observations on public men, they are the two principles, never to permit an attack to be made upon a particular minister, when we believe that the whole cabinet is responsible for his conduct—a species of attack which I have ever resisted, and which, I hope, I shall never sanction; and never to allow that any person employed in the service of Her Majesty abroad, however outrageous, however iniquitous, however ruinous in our opinion his conduct may be—whether he be governor, ambassador, or general—is guilty, so long as he is not recalled by Her Majesty's government."

It was not a question of ambassadors, but of ministers. Lord Aberdeen fell because he neglected the war in Asia. A new government was started "under a happy, though most fortuitous combination of circumstances—we had a prime minister, a modern Chatham—determined to carry on with vigour the war in Asia." Yet, what did it do? What did it do for Colonel Williams? Did it assist him with men? The gallant colonel asked for 20,000 men to come to the relief of the beleaguered garrison in Armenia; yet he pleaded in vain, because it was said we could not spare the troops he demanded. "We have been assured," said Mr. Disraeli, and in his words we see the vigour and high courage of the man who afterwards gave England a foreign policy of her own instead of an obedience to the foreign policy of others, "we have been assured that we were so engaged in the Crimea, that all the energies of the nation were so concentrated on Sebastopol, and that the stake was so great, the conflict so arduous, that we could not venture on undertaking any other enterprise. That the stake was great I freely confess; that the energies exerted were no

greater than the occasion demanded, events have testified; that mighty efforts were required to be made, even by the leading nations who were embarked in the struggle is beyond all controversy; but what armies were assembled on that remote peninsula? France was there, imperial France; England was there, free and patriotic England; you had by your side the Turkish army, a gallant band whose valour had been proved on many a well-contested field; you had brought from the north of Italy a body of men, dauntless and intrepid, for whom I trust that the glorious destiny is yet reserved of exercising a high and salutary influence on the fortunes of their country; and not content with these assembled hosts, you had entered into conventions, enabling Austria to call to the banks of the Danube all the chivalry of Hungary and of Bohemia to protect your interests in Wallachia and Moldavia. You were five nations allied in a common cause—England, France, Turkey, Sardinia, Austria. That you were playing a high game, and that a great stake was at hazard before Sebastopol, I do not for one moment dispute. But was there not another power who had also a great stake in that mighty fortress? Had not Russia everything at stake in Sebastopol? And did she not prove how deeply and how tenaciously she felt its importance and value? Now that peace has been concluded, we can afford to speak of Russia with the respect and admiration due to the prowess, the valour, and the foresight of which she gave such abundant evidence throughout the recent contest. Russia, I repeat, had everything at stake at Sebastopol. Her pledge was as grave, her interest in the fate of the struggle as momentous, as it is possible for language to describe. Yet Russia could at the same moment defend Sebastopol and invade Asia Minor. And now we are to be told that the combination of two such enterprises exceeded our powers! What a tribute to our country! What a compliment to our great and faithful ally! What an en-

couragement for those rising Sardinians! What an animating reflection for Turkey in her future conflicts with the Czar, to tell her that the banded nations of Europe made common cause against Sebastopol, and that Russia unaided and alone, not only baffled them for a year, but sent an army of division to Kars, while you could not afford 900 men to Colonel Williams! I will not believe that we are so fallen, that the House of Commons will tolerate such a defence. I tell you that you ought to have sent forces to Asia Minor—however great the stake for which you were contending, however arduous the difficulties that encompassed you. Yes; even though you had not had these true and gallant allies by your side—even though you had stood against Russia single-handed and alone at Sebastopol, it still would have been your duty to have sent assistance to Colonel Williams in Asia Minor. What did Colonel Williams ask? We have upon the table of this House a despatch from that heroic officer, written about the time when the ministry of the modern Chatham was formed on the principle of carrying on with vigour the war in Asia Minor. I believe I am correct in stating that that despatch bears the date of the very day on which the noble lord took his seat as first minister of the crown. In that most interesting document Colonel Williams gave you an estimate of the forces necessary, not only to secure his communication with Erzeroum and the coast, but also to destroy the Russian army in those regions. It was no such extravagant calculation—he asked for 20,000 men. Yet this assistance could not be granted. While you were besieging Sebastopol with the aid of half the nations of Europe, we are to be told that with all the resources of England as completely at his command as if he had been an autocrat, with an enthusiastic nation ready to pour their treasure into his exchequer, the noble lord at the head of the government could not afford to send 20,000 men to the relief of the beleaguered garrison in Armenia!

It exceeds belief. Say, if you choose that as a matter of high policy you did not think it necessary to interfere; say, as the chancellor of the exchequer said last night, who with all the force of a most logical reasoner laid it down that the fall of Kars was not an event of any military or political importance*—say that, or anything like it, and however the facts of the case may be, you will at least have a plausible case for argument; but in the name of common sense, and if you would not insult the intellect of the House, do not ask us to believe that you were prevented from vindicating a great principle of policy in Asia Minor, because forsooth your energies were concentrated on Sebastopol! Whatever humiliating conditions might be imposed upon Russia, exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, she would be entirely compensated for all her losses by the avowal of an English minister in the presence of an English parliament, that united Europe when pitted against her was not so strong as to be able to offer resistance to Muscovite arms simultaneously in any two regions.

Mr. Disraeli then put this very pertinent question to the government—If they did not send men for the relief of Kars, why did they not send money? Was the money required at Sebastopol, as well as the soldiers of five nations? They had raised a Turkish Loan Bill, yet not a piastre had been sent to the relief of Kars. Colonel Williams had not been greedy in his pecuniary requests. A small sum would have been sufficient to have saved Kars. "We all know," said Mr. Disraeli, "the amount necessary to have done that. A sum such as you raise as a testimonial to a successful railway speculator, the sum that every hour of our lives we are called upon to contribute for some meritorious but obscure instance of excellent conduct, would have saved

* "Whether we look, therefore, at the probable or the actual result of the fall of Kars, it must be admitted that in a strategical point of view it was not of first-rate importance. It was clearly secondary to the capture of Sebastopol."—*House of Commons, Chancellor of the Exchequer, April 29, 1856.*

Kars. Why, the cabinet might of themselves have subscribed the money!"* The present administration had pledged themselves to conduct the war with vigour; and he had no hesitation in accusing them of want of energy and want of foresight. Colonel Williams had given ministers full and timely notice of the force necessary to secure, not only his safety, but his triumph. The gallant officer's demands were tossed about from one public office to the other, from one individual to another, and nothing was done. Was that energy? When the attention of ministers had been directed to the state of affairs in Asia, parliament had been assured that in the opinion of the cabinet the power of the Porte was sufficient to maintain its authority and dominion in Asia. Was that foresight? "We have," sneered Mr. Disraeli, "prescience and vigour united, and the fall of Kars is the result."

The House, however, refused, in spite of the lucid and cogent arguments of the leader of the Opposition, to support Mr. Whiteside's motion. On a division it was lost by a large majority—Ayes, 176; Noes, 303; majority, 127.

In compensation for all past neglect Colonel, now General Williams, was lauded to the skies, and became the recipient of substantial benefits. He was created a baronet, and a pension of £1000 per annum conferred upon him. In both Houses of Parliament his gallantry became the subject of special comment.

When the treaty of Paris came before parliament, Mr. Disraeli did not take any part in the debate which followed upon the announcement of Lord Palmerston that the war was at an end. The leader of the Conservatives had said that, considering the blunders of the last two cabinets, he would support any peace that was not positively disgraceful. The treaty of Paris, though it did not fulfil all the conditions required by a large body of the English

people, was certainly not disgraceful.† We had obtained, by a war which should never have taken place, the terms which diplomacy under a firm and vigorous government could have commanded. The mighty fortress of Sebastopol and the powerful Russian fleet in the Euxine, which had so long been a standing menace to Turkey, were now no more. The Black Sea had been neutralized. Turkey had been received under the common law of Europe, and her independence guaranteed by the great powers. The frontier between Turkey and Russia had been rectified; and the Sultan, by a special firman, had put an end to all degrading restrictions among his subjects, and had raised the Christians to that just position which they ought to occupy. Still, there were several points and omissions in the treaty to which the Conservatives objected. They complained that the rectification of the territory of Bessarabia, as arranged at Vienna, had not been carried out owing to the fall of Kars; that though the Black Sea was neutralized, there was nothing to prevent Russia building vessels of war at her great maritime arsenal, Nicholaieff, and floating them when required into the Euxine; that there had been no clauses inserted in the treaty demanding the independence of the Circassian tribes; and that the position of affairs in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, was far from satisfactory. "Although the nation," said Lord Derby, "assents to peace, and gladly reposes from war, this is a peace which they do not hail with enthusiasm, but which they accept with reluctance, and which in the opinion of the country and in mine reflects no honour upon the ministers by whom it was negotiated."

Hostilities terminated, due recognition was made of the gallantry of the troops

* "I have now ascertained that the sum of £27,000 would have saved Kars."—*House of Commons, Mr. Whiteside, May 1, 1856.*

† "Sir, on the treaty of peace which the right hon. baronet (Sir James Graham) thinks so satisfactory, I shall express no opinion, except to say in general terms that peace is a great blessing where war has been carried on so inefficiently; and that for my part, after all I have seen, I should be disposed to welcome any peace which is not disgraceful."—*Speech of Mr. Disraeli on the Fall of Kars, May 1, 1856.*

engaged in the campaign. In both Houses the following vote of thanks was unanimously passed:—

“That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the navy, army, and royal marines, who have taken part in the operations of the late war, for the meritorious and eminent services which they have rendered to the queen and the country during the course of the war.

“That this House doth highly approve and acknowledge the services of the petty and non-commissioned officers and men of the navy, army, and royal marines, who have taken part in the operations of the late war, and that the same be communicated to them by the commanders of the several ships and corps, who are respectively desired to thank those under their command for their exemplary and gallant behaviour.

“That the thanks of this House be given to the officers of the several corps of militia which have been embodied in Great Britain and Ireland during the course of the war, for the zealous and meritorious services which, at home and abroad, they have rendered to their queen and country.

“That this House doth highly approve and acknowledge the services of the non-commissioned officers and men of the several corps of militia, who have been embodied in Great Britain or Ireland during the course of the war, and that the same may be communicated to them by the commanding officers of the several corps, who are desired to thank them for their patriotic conduct.”

In the House of Lords the vote was moved by Lord Panmure, and seconded by the Earl of Derby. In the House of Commons it was moved by Lord Palmerston, and seconded by Mr. Disraeli (May 8, 1856).

“I have, sir,” said the leader of the Opposition, “the high honour to second the motion of the noble lord. Although the struggle which has just terminated has, as the noble lord justly observes, not been of very long duration, yet such is the improvement which has taken place in the means of communication among the nations, and so complete in consequence has been the information which has reached us from the scene of warfare, that periods of hostility much more prolonged, and wars which some may think even more important in their object than the present, have not furnished the

chronicler of history with a greater variety of incidents and characters than the struggle which has just so happily terminated. So great has been the variety of deeds, so numerous have been the developments of character, which have already become household words in England, that one may say that every village has its hero and every fireside its thrilling tale. The object of the war, sir, was from the beginning understood by the people of this country, and they approved it, and the contest has been sustained by them with that firmness which can only be derived from conviction. The noble lord dwelt, with a detail into which it would be impertinent in me to enter, upon the peculiar circumstances of the various arms to which we are now ready to express our gratitude. Although these campaigns have not been of such duration as some which have taken place under great captains—those, for instance, of our own Wellington—still I believe there is hardly any variety of warfare which has not been proved during the course of the contest. We have had the pitched battle, and we have had the protracted siege; we have had heights triumphantly gained; we have had heights defended with success. Throughout these campaigns so numerous were the traits of individual bravery and heroism, such were the effects produced by the determination of our soldiers, that I do not know whether, were we to search the most glorious annals of past wars, we should be able to find deeds superior to the achievements of our contemporaries. The noble lord has also reminded us that the navy has in these transactions scarcely had the opportunity of distinguishing itself which it deserved, and of which it was fully prepared to avail itself. It is no doubt true that the sailors of England have never had the opportunity of meeting in pitched fight the naval armaments of the enemy; but we must remember that, by their enterprise, the flag of England has waved triumphantly upon waters where it had never before pene-

trated. The noble lord has likewise asked us to express our thanks to a third arm of the service—the marines—equal in every quality to the other two, whose daring deeds will, I am sure, always receive, as they have deserved, the admiration of this House. That is an arm which on various occasions in the wars of this country has rendered great services, for which it deserves the utmost praise which this House can bestow. I was very glad, also, that the noble lord dwelt with so much feeling, and so much justice, upon the services of the embodied militia. The manner in which the people of this country, when the militia was embodied, rallied round their national leaders is one of the most significant and gratifying proofs that the heart of England is true. The noble lord has stated that ten regiments of militia have served in our foreign garrisons during the late war; but the House should always recollect that it is not merely those ten distinguished regiments that have defended our Mediterranean garrisons who have been employed in active service during the war, but that those thirty-seven regiments, who in a manner so much to their credit offered their services to the sovereign, may be said, in a certain sense, to have partaken in the battles that have been fought.* From their ranks those 30,000 good and well-tried soldiers were collected—from their ranks many of the youth of England entered into the service of the queen; and we may recollect with pride, common I am sure to both sides of the

House, that the gentlemen of England have during the war garrisoned our arsenals in this country, and defended our strong places abroad; and that many of those gentlemen are members of the House. The noble lord has treated with justice the subject of our cordial relations with our allies throughout the struggle. Admirable as was the fortune of Marlborough and Eugène, I think if we look back to the co-operation which took place between England and her allies, that we shall see that it has not been inferior in concord, sympathy, and generosity, to that which prevailed in that illustrious age. But while I would join with the noble lord in the fullest expression of thanks, even to our allies—if formally we might offer them—let us remember that there are some who were not our allies, who were not the soldiers of our sovereign, to whom it would be not only generous but wise to do justice. The father of poetry it is, I think, who tells us that the strength of a conqueror cannot be more surely estimated than by the character of him whom he has conquered. Sir, the men whom the forces of the queen and her allies had to meet in the great struggle which is now concluded, were no common men. The legions that triumphed under Suwarroff, and fought at the Borodino, although defeated at Sebastopol, have proved themselves foemen worthy of the united chivalry of England and of France. In doing this justice to our late opponents, we are, in fact, only placing the achievements of our fellow-countrymen and our allies in their true aspect and proper position. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of the noble lord; and if it were not presumption I would express my opinion, that when the verdict—I will not say of posterity—but that when the calm and unimpassioned verdict of the time in which we live is given upon these events, it will be acknowledged that in the late struggle our country has shown all those qualities which maintain a nation's greatness, and which prevent the decline and fall of empires."

* "When parliament gave the government the power of accepting the offers of these regiments to go on foreign service, besides the militia regiments which went to the Mediterranean, thirty-seven other regiments offered their services, which the government had not at the time any occasion to accept. But there were several regiments that did go abroad. They garrisoned Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands. At Gibraltar there were the 3rd Lancashire, the Northampton, and the 2nd West York; at Malta the East Kent; in the Ionian Islands the Berkshire, the 1st Lancashire, the 3rd Middlesex, the Oxfordshire, the 1st Staffordshire, and the Wiltshire regiments. There were ten militia regiments that went, and thirty-seven that offered their services, and were ready to go; and I must do them the justice to say that those regiments who went have been reckoned as models of military efficiency."—*House of Commons, Lord Palmerston, May 8, 1856.*

CHAPTER XV.

"WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS."

SHORTLY after the conclusion of the Paris conference the state of Italy became a subject of some discussion in the diplomatic and political world. One of the chief reasons why Count Cavour had been desirous of supporting the allies during the Crimean war, by despatching a Sardinian contingent against Russia, had been that it would offer to Piedmont an opportunity of setting forth her grievances against the power of Austria. The iron hand with which Austria ruled her Italian provinces had only intensified the hate with which the northern population of the peninsula regarded the German invader. That Italy should no longer be a geographical expression, but a kingdom under one head—free, united, and independent of all control of the foreigner—was the aim of her politicians and the cry of her agitators. The brutal arrogance of the Austrians, and the conduct of the Neapolitan government towards their political prisoners, had caused a strong feeling of sympathy in England with this movement, especially when it was remembered how splendidly the Sardinians had behaved themselves in that terrible hour when their courage was put to the test on the heights before Sebastopol. It was said that, at whatever risk, we were bound to support Sardinia and do all in our power to advocate her efforts in favour of Italian independence. The government were urged to make a positive declaration that the Italian States should not be occupied by foreign troops beyond a certain date. It was known that the prime minister was no friend to Austrian rule in the Italian peninsula; and without committing the cabinet to any decided course, Lord Palmerston did not look coldly upon the prayers of the Piedmont patriots. He played the

difficult game of trying to please both parties: he was the friend of Austria, and at the same time the supporter of Italian independence.

With this double-minded policy Mr. Disraeli had little sympathy, and he candidly expressed his views when the Sardinian loan came up for discussion on the occasion of the introduction of the budget (May 19, 1856). He wished to know, he said, now that the House was asked to advance a considerable sum of money to Piedmont, what were the relations which subsisted between England and Sardinia? Studying the protocols of the conferences at Paris, he found expressions of sympathy with suffering Italy which greatly exceeded the usual caution of diplomatic language. He found that the sovereign of Sardinia was encouraged in every way to persist in his efforts for the liberation of Italy. He gave no opinion of his own upon the subject; but in those papers he read that the rule of Austria in Italy was insufferable, that the occupation of the Italian provinces by Austria was the principal source of the degradation and misery of Italy, that it was the mission and the policy of Sardinia to terminate those evils, and that she looked for the co-operation and support of England in her efforts to that end. How did these hopes agree with the tripartite treaty recently entered into between England, France, and Austria? How could the government at the same time be the friend of Austria and yet encourage Sardinia to expel Austria from the Italian peninsula? Had English ministers not profited by their bitter experience in 1848, when by words they encouraged Italy to resist, yet failed to support such advice by actions—a deser-

tion still remembered on the continent with anguish and indignation? "If," he cried, "for the sake of exciting the unreflecting applause of a mob, and in order to obtain for the existing government the reputation of being devoted to those vague entities called 'Liberal opinions,' we are again to be in the position of stimulating Italian liberalism, while at the same time we rivet the fetters of Austrian despotism, I foresee for this nation consequences most fatal to her just and legitimate influence, and to that high character which, notwithstanding the mistakes we sometimes commit, and despite our party conflicts, it is our happiness to think that our country has hitherto maintained." He hoped the House would refuse to be made the cat's-paw of any government for the sanctioning of pseudo-liberalism. Such a policy simply tended the more to crush the oppressed and aggravate the weight of the despotic power. To uphold Austrian authority and Italian regeneration at one and the same time was a feat which only brought diplomacy into contempt, stimulated dangerous yet futile revolutionary efforts, and gave an impetus to the teaching of those secret societies which had for their object the overthrow of every constitution in Europe. "I feel," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "a deep interest in the future of Italy, and sure I am that there is no honest man in this empire who does not look forward with delight to the day when that immortal land, to which we all owe so much, shall take her proper place among the nations, and be again one of the leading communities of the world. But I for one base my hope of that consummation on my faith in the genius of the people and the resources of the country. Time, the great reformer, will save Italy; but if there can be anything that will throw her back in her career—anything that will baffle her advancing destinies—it will be the intrigues of politicians who are not Italians, and who, for the sake of getting a support which otherwise they might not command, trifle with the fate of a great

people, pander to the lusts of secret societies, pretend to sympathy they do not feel, and, for the love of popular applause and a momentary success, compromise the destiny of a gifted nation."

In the dangerous power exercised by the "secret societies," Mr. Disraeli was even then a firm believer. At the present day, with sovereigns assassinated, public buildings blown up, agrarian outrages and revolt against authority systematically conducted, no politician can afford to ignore the concealed machinery by which fenians, socialists, nihilists, and land leaguers work their infamous plots. But thirty years ago these secret associations inspired more contempt than fear in the public mind, and little attention was paid to their movements by practical statesmen. It was the province of the police to imprison such fanatics and crush their revolutionary attempts, but it was beneath the notice of ministers and cabinets to spy upon their actions. Mr. Disraeli thought differently, and he fully recognized how mischievous an element these associations might become in a state. On the occasion of Lord John Russell (July 14, 1856) bringing the question of Italian regeneration before the House, and advocating the establishment of constitutional government in the peninsula, Mr. Disraeli, in opposing any interference in the affairs of Italy, unless it was to develop into a real and practical interference, thus alludes to these traitorous organizations:—"The noble lord who introduced this question seems to think that the revolutionary spirit in Italy is obsolete and worn out; that there is no contest going on in Italy but between worn-out dynasties and some intelligent and well-educated persons of the superior classes, who desire his great specific for all evils—constitutional government. I do not think that is a true judgment of the Italian people or of Italy. There is in Italy a power which we seldom mention in this House, but without considering and understanding which we shall never rightly comprehend

the position of Italy—I mean the secret societies. The secret societies do not care for constitutional government. They do not want existing society ameliorated, they want it changed; and they seek objects from such changes such as can never be obtained or secured by those enlightened institutions to which the noble lord refers. We know something more of these societies than we did. Since the outbreak of 1848 we have had means—not sufficient, but still we have had means of obtaining a knowledge of their numbers, organization, principles, and objects; and without some consideration of these it would be absolutely impossible for us to form a conception of what would be the consequence of our interference in the affairs of Italy. It is useless to deny, because it is impossible to conceal, that a great part of Europe—the whole of Italy and France and a great portion of Germany, to say nothing of other countries—are covered with a network of these secret societies, just as the superficies of the earth is now being covered with railroads. And what are their objects? They do not attempt to conceal them. They do not want constitutional government; they do not want ameliorated institutions; they do not want provincial councils nor the recording of votes; they want to change the tenure of land, to drive out the present owners of the soil, and to put an end to ecclesiastical establishments.” In conclusion Mr. Disraeli advised the government to adopt a plain, straightforward policy. If they were resolved to advocate Italian regeneration, they must go to war with Austria and obtain the sanction of parliament for the course they proposed to follow. He did not believe the country would support such interference. Still, the nation would at least know what ministers intended, and to what England had pledged herself. But diplomatic communications without a declaration of hostilities would only set a great portion of Italy in flames, and result in consequences which all would deplore.

The subject then dropped, and it was left, as we all know, to other influences than those of English interference to regenerate Italy, and place her in the family of European nations.

The cabinet had ushered in the session of 1856 with the most tempting promises. In spite of the war and its consequent diplomatic negotiations then on his hands, Lord Palmerston had introduced to the notice of parliament measures of great importance—in fact, a greater number of measures of importance than had ever before been submitted to the House of Commons by any minister. The list was indeed imposing. A court of appeal—the highest court of appeal in the last resort—was to be created; a new law of partnership, founded upon principles which would facilitate the application of capital to commerce, was to be written in the statute-book; the law of divorce and important changes in the law of marriage were to be fully considered and dealt with; the discipline of the Church was to be amended; the question of national education was to be placed upon a satisfactory basis; the most important produce of the empire was to be ascertained by a system of agricultural statistics. Then in addition to these measures, the House was to take into its consideration matters touching the testamentary jurisdiction of the country, the condition of the police, the superannuation of the civil service, municipal reform, the criminal appropriation of trust property, and the retirement of bishops from their sees. These were schemes which, if carried out, would satisfy the most gluttonous of legislative reformers. As a matter of fact, however, the session was drawing rapidly to its close, and yet of all these tempting promises held out to the country, scarcely one had been fulfilled. They were either abandoned shortly after having been introduced, or else completely ignored.

Mr. Disraeli resolved to repeat his experiment of 1848, and pass in full and

critical review the labours of the session. Accordingly (July 25, 1856), he moved for a return of "the number of public bills and their titles, the orders for which in any of their stages have been discharged during the present session, and the date of the discharge of each of such orders." The speech which he delivered in support of this motion was of great length, and is not only important as a complete history of the session, but as a constitutional essay on the power of party, and the nature of true Conservatism. He began by stating that he called attention to the course of public business, not for the purpose of preferring an indictment against ministers, but because he hoped that, during the recess, some remedy might be devised for the grievances he should bring under the notice of the House. He then enumerated the list of measures proposed by the government, and caustically commented upon the fashion it had been carried out. The bill to improve the law of partnership had been introduced in February only to be abandoned in March. A second bill on the same subject was introduced in April, and in July met the same fate as its predecessor. Bills for the reform of the poor law, and for the regulation of lunatic asylums in Ireland, had been ushered in by ministers in April and deserted in May. A bill for the relief of the mercantile marine had been announced early in February, and had been shelved at the end of the month. The bill to found an appellate jurisdiction had been brought down from the Lords in June and abandoned in July. The same fate had attended the bill relating to the amendment of the law of divorce. The Church Discipline Bill, it was true, had not been abandoned, but on being sent up to the Lords it had been rejected on a division. The bills relating to Irish legislation had been introduced, and all had been abandoned. The Civil Service Superannuation Bill had met with the same fate; and then, said Mr. Disraeli, who was always

a staunch supporter of this public service, "were terminated all the hopes of that most meritorious and ill-used body of Her Majesty's servants." The bill for the reform of the corporation of the city of London had been introduced in February, and had been abandoned in June. Not, however, to weary the House, continued the critic, the same fate had attended upon the bills brought forward by the president of the board of works and by the president of the board of health. Two Irish bills had, it was true, become law, but they had been based on the measures of a Conservative member of the House, which had accounted for their favourable reception. The County Police Bill had passed; also the bill respecting the retirement of bishops, but "that was a measure which did not deal with the question, and which, therefore, has settled nothing."

Was this, asked Mr. Disraeli, a satisfactory state of things? Was the House aware of the extent and the importance of the legislative failures of the session? Could ministers be surprised at the prevailing discontent? They had held out to the country great expectations, and therefore they could not be astonished at the country feeling greatly disappointed. But to what had this unfortunate state of things been due? It was not occasioned by the forms of the House, for since 1848 such forms had been considerably curtailed; and, indeed, members rather imagined that there had been of late years too great a diminution of the checks which those forms afforded against precipitate legislation, than believed that the conduct of public business could be facilitated by any further reduction in the forms of the House. Nor was it occasioned by long speeches or protracted debates, for the session had been singularly exempt from eloquence and prolonged discussion. "To what cause," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is it then to be ascribed? I will state what I believe to have been the cause of it, and I beg the noble lord

and his colleagues not to suppose that in stating it I mean anything in any way personal to themselves. Quite the reverse. I believe the cause of this failure in legislation is mainly, if not entirely, to be attributed to the fact that the noble lord and the hon. gentlemen who now form the ministry cannot command a parliamentary majority. In the general conduct of affairs the greatest respect is paid to gentlemen who occupy their position—a position which they obtained, in my opinion, with all honour, and in a manner which, as far as the noble lord is concerned, does I think the utmost credit to his spirit and promptitude. I say that the greatest respect is paid to gentlemen who occupy that position; and I believe there is great willingness on the part of the House to fulfil its functions as to supply. All the money which is required for the public service is cheerfully granted to the noble lord when we are at war. If troops are wanted they are at once given to him; and when he is engaged in negotiations and requires forbearance, that forbearance is yielded with equal readiness. Whether he prosecutes a war or makes a treaty, he can count on the support of the House. But when Her Majesty's ministers, turning to the functions of a minister in a legislative assembly, submit measures to the consideration of parliament they do not meet with that confiding support which can only exist in this House when it is founded on traditionary connection or identity of principle. The noble lord and his colleagues are therefore never sure that their measures will succeed; and there are two consequences that result from this circumstance, of the most injurious character. The first is—and it is a great evil—that the queen's ministers should deem legislation necessary on subjects of paramount importance, and yet should not be able to succeed in legislating thereon. But there is another evil inevitably consequent upon this, and to which I attribute a considerable share of the present disaster. The moment a government is habituated to defeat, the

moment they find the chances are that the measures which they propose will not succeed, those measures cease to be prepared with that scrupulous exactitude, that fineness, that finish, and that completeness of detail which characterize the measures of a government that feel, on introducing a bill to parliament, all the responsibility of successful legislation; and thus it happens that a ministry is tempted to obtain popularity for a moment, and to make for themselves some transient reputation—if you can call it reputation—by dealing with a variety of subjects so that the country may say, 'Here is a government of men of business; these are the men we want. They are going to construct a high court of appeal; questions that have remained unsolved for 300 years are now about to receive a solution from these practical men; the law of divorce is to be reformed; the law of matrimony is to be improved; the law of partnership is to be adapted to the requirements of an enlightened age and a commercial country; and other great subjects, on which the thought of the nation has long been collected, are at last to be settled by men who, regardless of party considerations, are determined to show what can be done by people who are animated only by a desire to pass wise and useful measures.' When parliament met it was announced, on high although anonymous authority, that a new era had arrived in the history of the English parliament; that the mere struggle for power and place was to cease, and that instead of it we were to have a body of ministers who were essentially practical men of business—who were to deal with all the difficult questions that had baffled all the preceding governments. We were told that the maxim, 'measures not men,' was for the future to form the principle of our political life. Yet, after six months of idle phantoms and of empty noise, it is no longer 'measures not men,' but it is men without measures."

They had then, continued Mr. Disraeli, a government unable to command a parlia-

mentary majority. Two causes had been alleged for that weakness. The first cause attributed it to the consequences of the Reform Bill. Yet that bill had been in operation twenty-four years; and for a period of at least fourteen years out of the twenty-four, the affairs of the country had been conducted by cabinets of almost every shade of opinion, which had commanded large and compact majorities. Lord Grey, Lord Melbourne, and Sir Robert Peel had carried on the government with sufficient majorities. Therefore it did not appear that there could be any truth in the popular statement that the Reform Bill was at the root of that evil. Then there was the second cause. It had been said that party no longer existed, that parties were broken up, and that public men no longer held distinctive principles. Upon that point Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length, proving that, though the Liberals were disorganized, the Conservative party in all its unity still existed, that it professed a distinct creed, and that its opponents had availed themselves of much of its teaching to carry out the programme of their policy. Those who sneeringly ask, what is Conservatism? had better study the following remarks of the late leader of the party:—

"It is said," observed Mr. Disraeli, "that this state of things may be attributed to the fact that parties are broken up. It is a favourite topic to talk of the 'dislocation' of parties. Party they say no longer exists because there are no longer distinctive principles among public men. That, I believe, is also a very current opinion. But is it true? It would be well for us to consider, for the interest of the country and for our own honour, whether the fact is so. I will not venture to make any observations upon honourable gentlemen who are members of this House. It is my happiness to think that I have personal friends on both sides of it; and indeed, in my opinion, the question is one too great to depend upon the opinions of individual members either on the one side or the

other. If I look to the country—if I look to society in its real sense, I mean to the society of all classes in this country—I do not find that parties are extinct—I do not find, when I listen to men of influence and mark among those classes of the community that take an active part in public affairs, that distinctive principles have ceased. I find that there exists two great classes of opinion which are fairly represented—not that I think the epithets originally were either very happy or very precise, but which have passed into universal and popular acceptance—by the terms Conservative and Liberal. I hold that those are two classes of opinions which are perfectly distinct, and in most instances are entirely opposed the one to the other. I will, with the permission of the House, proceed briefly, by way of illustrating my meaning, to advert to some points in which I think that distinction is particularly manifest. I wish to speak of both these classes, I assure honourable members, with the greatest respect. They are both represented in this country by numerous bodies of men; each opinion is supported by numbers, by intelligence, by property, and by respectability in every sense in which that word can be used. But their dissimilarity is perfectly perceptible. For example, I hold that a Conservative principle which regards the parliamentary settlement of 1832 as a satisfactory settlement. I hold that to be a Conservative principle which, without blind or bigoted adherence to the doctrine on all possible occasions, believes that tampering with the suffrage is a great evil to the state. I believe I am right in saying that it is a Conservative principle which holds that the due influence of property in the exercise of the suffrage is a salutary influence. I think it is a Conservative principle that in any representative scheme the influence of landed property should be sensibly felt. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that we maintain the union between Church and State—that we should not only maintain, but expand

the ecclesiastical institutions of this country. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that the estate of the Church should be respected, and that the Church itself should not be a stipendiary of the civil power. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that we maintain the Church in Ireland, believing that maintenance perfectly reconcilable with the rights and privileges of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in that kingdom. I hold it to be a Conservative principle to cherish and protect all traditionary influences, because they are opposed to a crude centralization, and because they are the source of an authority at once beneficent and economical. I hold it to be a Conservative principle that would respect existing corporations. (*Ironical cheering.*) Those ironical cheers from the hon. gentlemen opposite convince me that I am right in this estimate, and that there is a body in this country which, though I scarcely had expected it, is even represented in this House, and which holds opinions exactly the reverse of those which I have stated. (*Cheers from the Treasury bench.*) Those cheers from the ministerial benches show that there is in this country, and even in this House, a body who believe that the parliamentary settlement of 1832 ought not to be maintained—that it arrests the progress of the movement they desire to see; a body who believe that the influence of property on the exercise of the suffrage, which we regard as wholesome, ought to be prevented; a body who, instead of cherishing and encouraging, hold the influence of landed property in the representation of the country to be an influence which ought not to be encouraged, but rather to be checked. I have no fear of misrepresenting the opinions of honourable members opposite, when I say that there are those among them who look at least with suspicion upon the union between Church and State, and who, if they bow to it, bow to it only because it is established; who are not in favour of expanding—indeed scarcely of maintaining—our ecclesiastical institutions;

who would willingly see the Church a stipendiary of the civil power; who are opposed to traditionary influences (*Hear!*); who, as the cheer of the hon. gentleman assures us, would rather, instead of a free magistracy, have a magistracy framed upon what they consider more precise principles, but in my opinion principles not so favourable as the present to the preservation of the public liberties of the country. I do not find fault with honourable gentlemen for entertaining such opinions; I am trying to state them fairly; but their assent to my exposition proves that I am right in my assumption, that in this country there are two great parties, each representing distinctive principles."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to show that a similar difference of opinion existed between Liberals and Conservatives upon the question of foreign politics. "I have always considered," he said, "in respect to foreign affairs, that there were three great questions upon which it becomes any man who aspires to be a statesman in this country, as well as of any parliamentary party which incurs the responsibility of supporting particular individuals, to have clear and precise ideas. These three subjects are—the Russian empire, the Austrian empire, and our relations with the United States of America. There is no doubt a class of persons in this country who have always looked with great jealousy upon the expansion and the policy of the Russian empire; and when we went to war with Russia the object of that party—the avowed object, which they upheld with energy, eloquence, and earnestness—was the necessity of dismembering the Russian empire. For my own part, I have always been of opinion that the dismembering of the Russian empire is not an object which any statesman ought to propose to himself; that the dismemberment of the Russian empire could not be attained—even if we were successful in attaining it at all—without one of those long wars which might fatally exhaust the energies

and lower the character of this country in the scale of nations; and even if the dismemberment took place, we should find that the ultimate result would be, that the balance of power in Europe would be distributed in a manner prejudicial to our interests. That I take to be the Conservative view upon this question, as opposed to the views of the other section. I apprehend that there are in this country two distinct opinions, each supported by powerful parties, on this question of foreign policy. Take, again, the case of the Austrian empire. I hold that it is the Conservative opinion that the maintenance of the Austrian empire is necessary to the independence, and, if necessary to the independence, necessary to the civilization and even to the liberties of Europe. There is a contrary opinion to that. A great party in this country is of opinion, that from the dismemberment of the Austrian empire very great political advantages might be obtained, not for this country only, but for the whole civilized world. I will now bring you to a question which has recently been engaging our attention—to Italy. Just as the dismemberment of the Russian empire involves the question of the restoration of Poland and Finland, so the dismemberment of the Austrian empire involves the question of the independence of Hungary and the emancipation of Italy. Are we to be told that upon these subjects there are no different opinions in this country? Is there a single gentleman who is not conscious that, even to-morrow, he may be called upon to vote upon these questions—questions upon which the whole policy of the country depends? I hold it to be a Conservative principle to believe, that if we, or any other power, should forcibly interfere in the affairs of Italy, with the view of changing the political settlement of that country, the result will be, as in the case of an attempt to dismember Russia, one of those protracted wars that might fatally exhaust this country, and which, even

supposing it to be successful, would leave Italy, very possibly not in the possession of Austria, but under the dominion of some other power as little national. Let us look next to our relations with the United States. What is your policy with respect to that country? There are those who view with the utmost jealousy, and regard in a litigious spirit, the progress of the United States of America—who think that any advance in their power, or any expansion of their territory, is opposed to the commercial interest, and perhaps also to the political influence of England. But I am not of that opinion. I am of a contrary opinion. . . . I cannot forget that the United States, though independent, are still in some sense colonies, and are influenced by colonial tendencies; and when they come in contact with large portions of territory scarcely populated, or at the most sparsely occupied by an indolent and unintelligent race of men, it is impossible—and you yourselves find it impossible—to resist the tendency to expansion; and expansion in that sense is not injurious to England, for it contributes to the wealth of this country (let us say this in a whisper, lest it cross the Atlantic) more than it diminishes the power of the United States. In our foreign relations with the United States, therefore, I am opposed to that litigious spirit of jealousy which looks upon the expansion of that country and the advance of these young communities with an eye of jealousy and distrust.*

* Some few weeks before (June 16, 1856), Mr. Disraeli had given expression to similar sentiments. Our relations with the United States were at this time somewhat strained, owing to disputes as to affairs in Central America, and as to the fashion in which we had carried out the clauses of the Foreign Enlistment Act. He wished to know, inquired Mr. Disraeli, what was the cause of those painful and frequently recurring misunderstandings between England and the United States? He wanted to know why the United States, even admitting their case to be a good one, were so prompt, if not eager, to insist upon immediate reparation? He thought it would be wise if England would at last recognise that the United States, like all the great countries of Europe, had a policy, and that they had a right to have a policy. It was foolish for England to regard with jealousy any legitimate extension of the territory of the United States beyond the bounds which were originally fixed. If it were always to be impressed upon England that she was to look upon every expansion of the United States

When I am told that parties are broken up, I reply that the Conservative party in this country retains the opinions that it always professed, and is prepared to stand by those opinions."

But, laughed Mr. Disraeli, though the Conservatives were in existence, he should like to know what had become of the Liberal party? If it existed, by whom was it represented? The prime minister was not a Liberal, for he held all the opinions entertained by the Conservatives. He approved of the parliamentary settlement of 1832, and of the just influence of property on the exercise of the franchise; he supported the Irish church establishment; he had on every occasion cherished and promoted traditionary influences; he had upheld the free magistracy of the country. In his foreign policy—in spite of former opinions—both he and his colleagues had in their dealings with Russia, with Austria, with Italy, and with the United States, carried out the teaching and the policy of Conservatism.

"Well, sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "I cannot but think, under the circumstances, that the government of which the noble lord is the head is Conservative. Whether I look to subjects of internal interest on the conduct which it has pursued with respect to the high questions of foreign policy, I do not see that Her Majesty's government, in pursuing the course they did, were pursuing any other than a course in harmony with Conservative principles and Conservative practice. But because Her Majesty's government have pursued

such a course, are we justified in saying that parties are broken up? It may be very convenient to some persons to promulgate such a theory. It may be very convenient to some that such rumours should be believed; but I protest against their authenticity. I apprehend that there is a Conservative party and a Conservative policy; and if the noble lord and his colleagues are pursuing that policy, the inference is erroneous that the Conservative party is extinct. What party is really extinct it is not for me now to say. I would rather leave that question to the inference and the critical conclusion of the House and the country. I know it may be said that it would be more straightforward, and more in accordance with the genius of the people of this country, that the Conservative policy should be carried out by those who are avowedly Conservatives; but what I say is, that we who maintain Conservative opinions, and who deplore the consequences of a parliamentary session like that now closing, that we have two sources of consolation in the present state of affairs. In the first place, we have what I think should be, and what I have no doubt will be, the greatest consolation to us—to see our opinions prevalent in high places. The second, which is scarcely less important, is that the inevitable consequence of the existing system will be an injurious influence upon the position of our rivals—the Liberal party. No party can long exist where its chief and selected men are in power and continue to hold office, not only without carrying their principles into effect, but without even frankly avowing their profession. I see before me many members of the administration who obtained their seats in this House by their protestations to their constituents—by their Liberal engagements to the great Liberal party; but who having adopted a Conservative policy, still retain their seats in that administration. It is for them to explain their position to their constituents, and to the party in the country whom they are

as an act detrimental to British interests, she would be pursuing a course which, while it would not prevent that expansion on the part of the United States, would involve her in struggles that might prove of a disastrous character. He then instanced the case of California. With what jealousy the conquest of California by the States was regarded in England, yet none of the gloomy forebodings had been realized, but, on the contrary, the conquest had been of the greatest benefit to the British empire. He felt sure that, when once the United States saw that England was no longer jealous of the legitimate development of their power, all these disputes and angry discussions between the two countries would cease. It was the business of a statesman to recognize the necessity of an increase in the power of the States.

supposed to represent. But I would say to the Conservative party, Do not lose heart; if this system continues, the Liberal party will be thrown back fifty years; nothing can long resist the deleterious influence of the position in which they are now placed with reference to the possession of power. We have, then, these two sources of consolation; and the people of this country will, upon reflection, soon discover what is the reason that measures of great public necessity are not passed in this House, though they are proposed by a minister. They will find upon reflection, that from the competitive emulation of great political parties has sprung that wise and temperate system of government which has so long characterized the history of this country; they will cherish with still greater interest, and they will value still more highly, the distinctive principles which form parties. At any rate, when we are told—as we have been told for the last six months—that the present lamentable state of public affairs is occasioned by the break up of parties, we at least can say, ‘That allegation does not apply to us; we are a Conservative party; we hold Conservative opinions; we are prepared to maintain them; and if a minister who has no opinions cannot pass his measures, he has no right—and those who defend him have no right—to libel the constitution of the country to which we owe all our reputation and our greatness.’ The motion was agreed to, and three days afterwards this session of pledges unfulfilled, and hopes raised only to be disappointed, came to an end.

On the conclusion of the war, the country had expected that the attention of the government would be directed to questions of domestic reform, and that continental politics would cease to occupy the prominent position lately accorded them. Lord Palmerston, however, could not refrain from mixing himself up with what Mr. Disraeli called the “little difficulties” of the hour. There was the “little difficulty” with Persia, owing to the Persian occupa-

tion of Herat; there was the “little difficulty” with central Italy, owing to the treatment of political prisoners by the king of Naples; there was the “little difficulty” between Prussia and Switzerland as to Neufchâtel; and now a “little difficulty” had arisen as to our relations with China. Mr. Disraeli strongly objected to the course Lord Palmerston had pursued in dealing with foreign questions which did not directly bear upon the interests of England. A foreign policy is necessarily a policy of foreign interference; yet it does not follow that foreign interference is consequently a legitimate foreign policy. The policy of Lord Palmerston was that of foreign interference—an interference more intrusive than aggressive, yet perfectly sufficient to disquiet the public mind. On the opening of parliament (February 3, 1837), Mr. Disraeli alluded to this meddlesome conduct of the cabinet. “We had a right to suppose,” said he, “that Her Majesty’s ministers, after having weaned the mind of this country from the excitement which war always engenders, would no longer have permitted the attention of the people to be diverted and distracted from the consideration of our domestic affairs; that well-matured and well-considered measures of economical and administrative improvement would have been prepared during the recess and submitted to the consideration of parliament, and that we should have been enabled to look forward to the attainment of that which is usually supposed to be a necessary consequence of peace—to a mitigation of the public burdens, so that the capital and the labour of the country might adapt themselves with increased energy to the opening which had been offered for their employment.” Instead of which, he remarked, there was nothing but “wars and rumours of wars” in the speech from the throne, and allusions implying a want of confidence on the part of the cabinet in foreign governments, for which there was no occasion. He hoped that the glory of the late war would not induce the country

to sanction extravagant military establishments. It was not advisable that England should become what was called "a great military nation," though of course it was necessary to establish those sources from which an effective army could at all times and in due season be raised. The attention of the government should be occupied, not in meddling with continental politics, but in the revision of taxation. The question of the income tax was a most important one. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone had promised that the tax should cease in 1860, and in his opinion the settlement of 1853 should be adhered to. So convinced was he, continued Mr. Disraeli, of the necessity of that step, that he would, a few days hence, move "that taxes which had been granted in time of war for the purpose of carrying on hostilities, by way of income tax, should not be levied in time of peace."

This promise was faithfully kept. Pursuant to notice Mr. Disraeli moved (February, 20, 1857), "That in the opinion of this House it would be expedient, before sanctioning the financial arrangements for the ensuing year, to adjust the estimated income and expenditure in the manner which shall appear best calculated to secure the country against the risk of a deficiency in the years 1858-59 and 1859-60, and to provide for such a balance of revenue and charge respectively in the year 1860 as may place it in the power of parliament at that period, without embarrassment to the finances, altogether to remit the income tax." For such an inquiry there was every just ground. The object of the resolution of Mr. Disraeli was to abolish the income tax in 1860 by a wholesome reduction in the national expenditure. That expenditure had considerably increased since the war, and it had become impossible to deal with the subject properly unless the reasons of this expenditure were analyzed. Mr. Disraeli began by criticising the budget which the chancellor of the exchequer had recently introduced, and showed that in the year 1858-59 there would be a

deficiency of £5,000,000, and again in the year 1859-60, a deficiency of at least £10,000,000; yet in 1860 the income tax, yielding £7,000,000, was to be taken off. How could such a tax be remitted, he asked, at a time when so colossal a deficiency would have to be grappled with? Under those circumstances, he had thought it his duty to introduce the resolution now before the House. If they were menaced by a deficiency, what could be more judicious than to proceed upon that excellent principle of finance which adjusted the estimated income and expenditure in such a way as was best calculated to prevent a deficiency, and then to provide in the best manner they could for enabling parliament, in the year 1860, to remit the whole of the income tax, as was promised to the country in 1853? That promise ought to be kept. "Sir," said Mr. Disraeli, "with regard to the income tax, I am not one, and I think I have shown I am not one, who will resist a fair introduction of direct taxation in our system. But I say direct taxation has never taken a more intolerable form than in the income tax. It has been condemned by the voice of the country, and the decision and policy of this House. I need not enter into the catalogue of its enormities—that it is unjust, unequal, inquisitorial. There are few who have listened to me who have not had personal proof of these qualities of the tax. They are grievances which are not to be borne, and in time of peace the income tax as a paramount feature of our taxation cannot be endured. In a national emergency these grievances are not felt. At such a moment private grievances are absorbed in public patriotism, and no one thinks of the injustice, the inequality, and the inquisitorialness of a tax, if he believes that the honour or existence of the country is at stake. In such an emergency no one criticises a tax; but just in proportion as it is exempt from criticism at a period of public danger, the moment a period of tranquillity returns you will find a reaction

of odium to that degree that the tax is perhaps more criticised than it deserves. But the result is that the income and property tax is the most odious form of direct taxation, and I protest against that easy mode of argument which prevails, and which holds that any person who opposes the income tax is opposed to direct taxation. When I oppose it, it is as the most odious form of direct taxation." Mr. Disraeli then concluded by saying that he was for wise and not wild reduction—for reduction with a definite object founded on definite knowledge. His resolution was peculiarly adapted to the position in which they found themselves. They wanted something that was clear in words and definite in expression. "Let us, therefore," he said, "carry out this resolution, which in my humble judgment lays down the right principle on which our finance should always rest—the fundamental and cardinal principle of finance, to which this House should ever adhere; let us require that before we sanction the financial arrangements of the government, we shall see the estimated income and expenditure adjusted in the manner best calculated to secure the country against the risk of a deficiency."

On a division, though Mr. Gladstone supported the resolution, the motion of Mr. Disraeli was lost by a majority of eighty. It was felt by the House that it would be wiser to go first into the estimates and then ascertain what reductions could be made. The motion of Mr. Disraeli was looked upon as an abstract resolution, which stopped the House from discussing the budget in committee.

The anticipated deficiency in the exchequer was not likely to be reduced by intelligence which was now received from China. In the extreme east of Asia we had another "little difficulty." Thanks to the hasty instructions of the government, and to the still hastier conduct of a civil servant, we were engaged in active hostilities in the neighbourhood of Canton. The cause of the dispute, briefly stated, was as fol-

lows:—Early in the October of the preceding year, the *Arrow*, a "lorcha"—a vessel so called after the Portuguese settlement at Macao, and signifying that it was a ship built upon European lines—was boarded in the Canton river by certain Chinese officers. Of the crew, twelve were taken prisoners on a charge of having been concerned in piracy; whilst two men, the remainder of the crew, were left in custody of the ship. Upon the matter coming to the knowledge of Mr. Parkes, the English consul at Canton, he made a demand from the governor of Canton, claiming the return of the captured men on the ground that, by the clauses in the treaty between England and China, any pirates or others found on board of a British vessel, and claimed by the Chinese authorities, should be demanded from the English consul, and not be forcibly removed by Chinese officers from a British ship. The whole question turned upon the point whether the "lorcha" was a British or Chinese vessel. The matter was referred to Sir John Bowring, the English plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, who at once decided that the ship was a British barque, and officially declared that unless the captured crew were released and an apology offered for the conduct of the Chinese officers, together with a promise that no such act should be repeated in the future, naval operations would be immediately commenced against the Chinese. On October 22nd the whole of the imprisoned crew were returned; and a letter was despatched, in which Commissioner Yeh, the governor of the province, stated that the "lorcha" was not a British ship, that the English had really no concern in the matter; but that out of courtesy he had returned the men at the instance of the consul. This response was not considered satisfactory by the militant Sir John Bowring. The very day after the reply of Governor Yeh, operations were commenced against the Barrier Forts on the Canton river. This was but the beginning of destruction. The Barrier Forts, the Bogue Forts, the Blenheim Forts,

and the Dutch Folly Forts, and numerous junks, were taken and blown up before the first fortnight in November. Then the suburbs of Canton were attacked, and our artillery was busy shelling the town itself. China was indignant and exasperated, and a loud outcry was raised at home against this unjustifiable destruction and needless devastation.

The whole business came before parliament. Upon inquiry it transpired that the Chinese authorities had been throughout in the right, and that the English plenipotentiary at Hong Kong had acted in the matter with nefarious promptitude. There had been no grounds, it was discovered, for the warfare and devastation then being carried on in the Canton river. The *lorcha Arrow* was in no respect a British ship. She was built in China, she was owned by the Chinese, she was manned by Chinese, and she was engaged in piracy contrary to the interests of China. In defence it was said that if the *lorcha* were a Chinese vessel, she had obtained a registry which entitled her to fly the British flag, and thus claim British protection; but upon further investigation even this weak defence broke down, for it was ascertained that the *Arrow* had failed to renew the license granting her the registry, and had thus at the time of her capture no right whatever to hoist the British flag. In both Houses the conduct of the plenipotentiary at Hong Kong was severely animadverted upon. Sir John Bowring was a very able, a very opinionated, and a very domineering man. He had acquired a considerable knowledge of China from long residence as consul at Canton; and on a vacancy occurring in the office of plenipotentiary and superintendent of trade at Hong Kong, he was considered the best man to be appointed to the post. Some cynical amusement was created when it was afterwards made public that this arrogant and combative man, who throughout the dispute was always in the wrong, and who had issued the hastiest orders to massacre inoffensive Chinese and shell

unprotected towns, had acted, before he entered the service of the state, as secretary of the Peace Society.

On February 24, 1857, Lord Derby, in a brilliant speech, brought forward a motion in the Upper House condemning the conduct of the British authorities in China. In spite of the support the vote of censure received from Lord Lyndhurst and others, the motion was defeated by a majority of 146 to 110. Two days later Mr. Cobden, in the House of Commons, proposed the following resolution:—"That this House has heard with concern of the conflicts which have occurred between the British and Chinese authorities in the Canton river; and, without expressing an opinion as to the extent to which the government of China may have afforded this country cause of complaint respecting the non-fulfilment of the treaty of 1842, this House considers that the papers which have been laid upon the table fail to establish satisfactory grounds for the violent measures resorted to at Canton in the late affair of the *Arrow*; and that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China." In the course of the debate, which lasted four nights, and which engaged the attention of the most eminent members of the House, it became evident that the ex-secretary of the Peace Society had acted with more than the usual amount of combative interference characteristic of that pugnacious association. It was proved that Sir John Bowring had taken more upon himself than the occasion justified; that he was aware that the "*lorcha*" had no claim to British protection, and in his correspondence had designedly suppressed that fact; and that the Chinese had given no cause for the hostilities which had ensued. The government at home was also accused of an improper exercise of the authority of the crown in the matter, since it was the province of a wise government to correct the over-zeal of its agents. The motion of Mr. Cobden was supported by members on both sides of the House; by

Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone; by Lord John Russell and Sir Bulwer Lytton; by Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Roundell Palmer; by Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Milner Gibson; by Sir Frederick Thesiger and Mr. Sidney Herbert. Against this combination of men "who had for a long course of time been kept apart by the strongest differences of opinion, and by recollections of resentments even not now entirely forgotten," Lord Palmerston was very wroth. He sneered at it as "a coalition," a "factious combination," a "cowardly arrangement," which in no way represented the feelings of the nation. The country he was sure, if appealed to, would be with him, and not with the coalition his opponents had formed themselves into. His prediction proved to be correct.

At the close of the fourth night of the debate, Mr. Disraeli (March 3, 1857) addressed the House. The motion brought forward by Mr. Cobden appeared to him, he said, both moderate and definite, and he was prepared to regard it as a vote of censure upon the government. He thought it more for the honour of the House of Commons that it should be so looked upon, than that it should be considered as a mere vote of censure upon certain absent officials. "I am not going to enter," he said, "into any of the legal arguments which have been adduced; and I must admit my surprise that the debate has been so lengthened by the introduction of the legal element, because it appears to me that a few observations would dispose of the whole of that part of the subject. In the first place, if the *Arrow* had been a British ship, built at Blackwall, owned by an Englishman, and manned by British seamen, I do not think the government would have been authorized in taking the course which they adopted; and in the second place, the representatives of England in China were unable to take their stand upon the case which they originally stated, and were driven to placing the whole matter on a very different issue. On both grounds our position is equally

untenable, and therefore I think that the legal part of the question as regards the *Arrow* is not material. It has all along been a question not of law, but of policy, and it is to this question of policy I shall briefly address myself." It was not a question, he said, whether Sir John Bowring had spoken falsely, or Commissioner Yeh was a liar. The conduct of Sir John had been ratified, sanctioned, and approved by the government, and therefore the conduct of that official ought not to be reviewed by the House of Commons. It was not the behaviour of the plenipotentiary at Hong Kong, but the policy of the government, that they should criticise and discuss. And what was that policy? It was an attempt by force to gain entrance into Canton, and thus to increase our commercial relations with the East. "There is one idea too prevalent with regard to China," said Mr. Disraeli, "namely, that all England has to do is to act with energy in order to produce the same results as have been achieved in India. Fifty years ago Lord Hastings offered to conquer China with 20,000 men. So great a captain as the Marquis of Hastings might have succeeded; but since the time when our Clives and Hastings founded our Indian empire, the position of affairs in the East has greatly changed. Great powers have been brought into contact with us in the East. We have the Russian empire and the American republic there, and a system of political compromise has developed itself like the balance of power in Europe; and if you are not cautious and careful in your conduct now in dealing with China, you will find that you are likely not to extend commerce, but to excite the jealousy of powerful states, and to involve yourselves in hostilities with nations not inferior to yourselves. . . . If that is the true state of affairs, this country must dismiss from its mind the idea of dealing, as barbarous and uncivilized, with states with which powers like ourselves have sympathies; and we must habituate ourselves to the idea of extend

ing to countries like China the same diplomatic intercourse that we adopt with other nations. You cannot do that in a moment, it must be a work of time. . . . You are dealing with a country of immense antiquity. You have been reminded in the debate that China enjoys a civilization of twenty-five centuries. In point of antiquity the civilization of Europe is nothing to that. But the result of those ancient habits and customs is an existence of profound ceremony and formal etiquette; and yet you expect that such a country will not be startled by the frank and occasionally, I am sorry to say, the brutal freedom of European manners. With a policy of combination with other powerful European states in attempting to influence the conduct of the Chinese by negotiations and treaties, it is my belief that ultimately slowly but surely we may attain our end; but it is because the actual policy of the government—the policy approved and vindicated by the noble lord—seems to me inconsistent with the policy of combination with other European states, that I think the time has arrived for the House of Commons to express an opinion upon events so startling, and upon behaviour so inconsistent with such a profession."

Mr. Disraeli then commented in severe terms upon the accusation made by Lord Palmerston, that the motion brought forward by Mr. Cobden had been the result of factious combinations and concerted movements; in his closing remarks he indulged in one of those personal attacks which always irritated the victim and tickled the House. "We have been told, sir," he said, "of party moves. I really think the time has come when both sides of the House should cease indulging in these platitudes. Why, sir, everything is a party move in a House which ought to be ruled by party, and which, if not ruled by party, would soon lose all its significance. What is a party but a body of men who have a policy which they recommend, and who do not shrink from the responsibility of putting

that policy into practice? But really there has been no party move on the present occasion. A resolution has been brought forward by the hon. member for the West Riding. On this side of the House it has received considerable, but not unanimous support. I have the misfortune to differ on this occasion from many gentlemen with whom I act in political life, and among whom are some of my most intimate friends in private life. If I look to the benches opposite, I find there the noble lord the member for the city. He is also a party to this unprincipled combination. I really think that the first minister should settle his courteous description with his late much-cherished and honoured colleague, and not with me. There are also gentlemen opposite who once did act in very intimate connection with the Conservative party, and the apprehension that that intimacy should be renewed has conjured up before the first minister a combination at once the most horrible and the most heterogeneous. The first minister is, of all men, the man who cannot bear a coalition. Why, he is the archetype of political combinations without avowed principles! See how his government is formed. It was only last year that every member of his cabinet, in this House, supported a bill introduced, I think, by a late colleague. It was opposed in the other House by a member of the government, who, to excuse his apparent inconsistency, declared that when he took office the first minister required no pledge from him on any subject whatever. Yet the noble lord is alarmed and shocked at this unprincipled combination! The noble lord cannot bear coalitions. The noble lord has acted only with those amongst whom he was born and bred in politics! That infant Hercules was taken out of a Whig cradle! And how consistent has been his political life! Looking back upon the past half century, during which he has professed almost every principle and connected himself with almost every party, the noble lord has raised a warning voice to-night

against coalitions, because he fears that a majority of the House of Commons, ranking in its numbers some of the most eminent members of this House—men who have been colleagues of the noble lord—may not approve a policy with respect to China, which has begun in outrage, and which, if pursued, will end in ruin. That, sir, is the position of the noble lord. And what defence of that policy have we had from the noble lord? Has he laid down a single principle on which our relations with China ought to depend? Has he enunciated a solitary political maxim which should guide us in this moment of peril and anxiety? On the contrary, he has covered a weak and shambling case by saying—what?—that he is the victim of a conspiracy. It is the old story. How often does a prisoner at the bar, when he is in the unfortunate position of having no defence, declare that the whole thing is a conspiracy?

Accustomed to majorities which have been obtained without the assertion of a single principle, which have, indeed, been the consequence of an occasional position, and which have in fact originated in the noble lord's sitting on that bench without the necessity of expressing an opinion upon any subject, foreign or domestic, that can interest the heart of the country or influence the opinion of the nation, the noble lord at last finds that the time has come when, if he be a statesman, he must have a policy; and that it will not do, the instant that the blundering of his cabinet is detected, and every man accustomed to influence the opinion of the House unites in condemning it, to complain to the country that he is the victim of conspiracy. Let the noble lord not only complain to the country, but let him appeal to the country. I hope my constituents will return me again; if they do not, I shall be most happy to meet him on the hustings at Tiverton. I should like to see the programme of the proud leader of the Liberal party—'No Reform! New Taxes! Canton Blazing! Persia Invaded!' That would be the programme of the states-

man who appeals to a great nation as the worthy leader of the cause of progress and civilization."

The House was of the same opinion as Mr. Disraeli. On a division the resolution of Mr. Cobden was carried, and ministers defeated by a majority of sixteen—Ayes, 263; Noes, 247.

The cabinet thus subjected to a vote of censure, two courses were open to the prime minister—to resign office, or to appeal to the country. Lord Palmerston preferred the latter alternative. The case, he said in his ministerial explanation, seemed to him to be of so peculiar a character that he had not thought it his duty to retire from power. He proposed, however, to dissolve parliament and appeal to the constituencies, as soon as the state of public business admitted the adoption of such a course. To this arrangement Mr. Disraeli cordially assented. He considered such a proceeding advantageous to the public interest, and pledged himself to give every possible facility to the progress of public business. He was of opinion that the appeal to the country would be of great advantage to the public service. "I do think," he said (March 5, 1857), "that it is of the utmost importance to the character of parliament, and to the interests of the realm, that parliamentary parties should be more defined than they have been. I am myself persuaded that that habit which has of late been much in vogue of decrying the influence of party has had a very injurious effect upon the conduct of public affairs. Party, well defined and well appreciated, is the best guarantee for public and private honour; and I trust that when this recurrence to the sense of the country has taken place, members will be returned to this House with definite opinions; that we shall know who is prepared to change and who is ready to maintain the institutions of the country; who is in favour of the reduction of the burdens of the people, and who is in favour of increasing them; who is in favour of a foreign policy which, while it main-

tains the true interests and dignity of the country, is conciliatory to all other states; and who is in favour of that turbulent and aggressive system which, I believe, must increase the burdens of the people, and ultimately endanger and diminish the power of our nation."

As soon as the necessary arrangements as to the financial measures for the ensuing year had been settled, parliament was dissolved, and the country busied with the conflict and turmoil of a general election. Mr. Disraeli visited Hughenden and issued the following address:—

"Gentlemen, the House of Commons having, by a solemn vote, in which the leading men of all parties concurred, censured the cruel and double-dealing policy pursued by the agents of the government towards the Chinese, parliament has been dissolved. Since the announcement of the dissolution the minister has declared that his agents in China will be superseded,* thus acknowledging the justness of the vote of the House of Commons. It is clear, therefore, that the plea for dissolution is a pretext. What, then, is the real object? To waste a year. Lord Palmerston is an eminent man, who has deserved well of his country; but as prime minister he occupies a false position. He is the Tory chief of a Radical cabinet. With no domestic policy, he is obliged to divert the attention of the people, from the consideration of their own affairs, to the distraction of foreign politics. His external system is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed. Hence arise excessive expenditure, heavy taxation, and the stoppage of all social improvement. His scheme of conduct is so devoid of all political principle, that when forced to appeal to the people, his only claim to their confidence is his name. Such arts and resources may suit the despotic ruler of a continental state exhausted by revolutions; but they do not become a British

minister governing a country proud, free, and progressive, animated by glorious traditions, and aspiring to future excellence. The honour and the best interests of the country require that men should be returned to the new parliament with definite principles. If you will confer on me, for the fourth time, the high distinction of being your member, I will, as heretofore, uphold our constitution in church and state, and support those popular and aristocratic institutions which, in this country, have made power a privilege, but have extended the possession of that privilege to all who exert themselves to deserve it—institutions which have educated a nation to aspire and excel. The general policy which I would enforce at this juncture may be contained in these words—honourable peace, reduced taxation, and social improvement. There is an attempt at the present day to play off the parties which exist, and have always to a certain degree existed, in the church against each other for political objects. This is a dangerous course for churchmen to sanction. The church, which, irrespective of its higher functions, is one of the great guarantees of English happiness, has foes enough without seeking for them in her own bosom; and it would appear to me that, instead of quarrelling among themselves, churchmen should evince mutual forbearance, unite on the common ground of ecclesiastical polity, and oppose all efforts to impair the integrity of that reformed Church of England which is the best security for the religious liberty of all classes and creeds of Her Majesty's subjects. I have the honour to remain, your obliged and faithful servant, B. DISRAELI. *Hughenden Manor, March 17.*"

There was no attempt to oust the leader of the Opposition from his seat, and he, together with his colleagues, Mr. Du Pré and Mr. Cavendish, was duly returned to parliament. After the election Mr. Disraeli addressed a few words to his constituents. He cordially thanked them for having returned him a fourth time to the House of Commons, and explained the course he

* The Earl of Elgin had been appointed as minister plenipotentiary to China.

and his party had pursued in the past. The two most important portions of his speech on this occasion were those which related to the Vienna negotiations and to the cry, then becoming more and more pronounced, for reform. With reference to the transactions at Vienna he said, "We have been told that Lord Palmerston took the reins in a moment of difficulty, and carried on the war with great efficiency. Yes, but it should be remembered that when he took the reins he commenced negotiations for an ignominious peace. He sent Lord John Russell to Vienna with instructions to negotiate for peace. I have heard it stated, and I believe it is a fact, that the instructions to Lord John Russell were drawn up by Lord Palmerston's own hand; and I think it highly probable that the most experienced statesman we have would not fail in performing such a duty. It did so happen, however, that, although the negotiations were secret, somebody told me the terms of them, and I formed the conclusion that they would be most unsatisfactory to the people, and most injurious to the interests and honour of the country. My information, though accurate, was not complete, and I brought forward a motion in the House of Commons, asking it to come to the resolution that the ambiguous language and uncertain conduct of Her Majesty's representative at Vienna were sources of great anxiety to parliament. That resolution, brought forward on the eve of the Whitsuntide holidays, was defeated by a great majority of the House—a majority of 100—and the reason was, that Lord John Russell had returned and made a warlike speech, and was supported by the prime minister with so much cordiality, that the House of Commons did not think that the impression I wished to convey was justifiable. But it subsequently appeared that the French plenipotentiary who had consented to those terms, annoyed that the negotiations had failed, resigned his office. I then revealed, in my own vindication, all that had occurred, and when parliament

met after the holidays, some of the members who voted against my motion expressed their deep regret that they had adopted that course. The consequence was, that I asked a distinguished friend of mine (Sir Bulwer Lytton) to bring the whole subject forward. What was the consequence? The existence of the government was at stake, and the House would have terminated its existence had it not been that Lord John Russell saved it by making himself the voluntary scapegoat of the government. I will do Lord Palmerston the justice to state that he offered to stand or fall by Lord John Russell; but as the majority would have been overwhelming, Lord John offered to be the scapegoat, and the government was saved. In justice to Lord John Russell, it is necessary I should say, that in my opinion he was not responsible for those terms, but that the responsibility rested with the cabinet and the prime minister. I mention these things to show that we did not deviate from the patriotic course of the Opposition, and to show that some credit is due to the parliamentary Opposition of England during the governments of Lords Aberdeen and Palmerston."

During the election the subject of parliamentary reform had been freely discussed, and it was evident that within a few months the question would have to be seriously entertained by any ministry that was in power. Mr. Disraeli shortly expressed his views upon the matter. He did not, he said, believe the people were much in earnest in their demand for it. The talk they had heard during the last fortnight was more the excitement of the hustings, than the expression of earnest feeling on the part of any large body of the people. The state of parties, however, was likely to give reform greater prominence than it had lately. Then came the question as to what measure of reform they ought to have. The moderate Reformers were in favour of bit-by-bit reform; the earnest and real Reformers demanded comprehensive measures. For his part he was opposed to all

bit-by-bit reforms, because he found that, however plausible they might appear, they always ended in a job. He considered the Reform Act of 1832 a one-sided measure, as it abolished the Tory rotten boroughs, but left the Whig rotten boroughs intact. He voted for the extinction of the Whig rotten boroughs—Calne, Tavistock, Westbury, and the rest. But what he would not do was to propose or consent to the abolition of the distinction between counties and boroughs, and the division of the country into electoral districts. "Blot Buckinghamshire out of the political map?" "No!" he cried. To him Buckinghamshire was hallowed ground. "My opinion," he said, "is that the traditions of particular localities go to form part of the national character, and that a man who sees the road which Hampden ascended with the petition of rights is proud that he lives in a locality so intimately connected with the history of his country; that if you see a temple dedicated to the eloquence of Chatham at Stowe, you rejoice to find that the county of Buckingham is associated with so great a character; and that you cannot go to Beaconsfield, and view the oak under which Burke matured his reflections on the French Revolution, without entertaining a feeling of exultation that your county was the scene of meditations which so powerfully influenced the mind of Europe."

Having stated his objections to these measures, he proceeded as follows:—"With respect to the ballot, all persons who have considered the subject must agree that the ballot is impossible unless accompanied with a great extension of the suffrage. It would be insupportable and intolerable that those who enjoy the privilege of voting should exercise it in secret, without being subject to that control and supervision which the possessors of other privileges have. Admitting, then, that if you have the ballot, you must also have extension of the suffrage, you will have another important question to consider, namely, whether you will accompany the

ballot with plurality of voting? Do you mean to say that the lord-lieutenant of the county, for instance, is to have no more voice at an election than some individual in his service whose weekly wages might entitle him to live in a house of sufficient value to give him a vote? Where is the line to be drawn? Is one man to have fifty votes, according to his property, and another man only one? If every man is to have a vote, property will have no influence at an election for members, and you abandon the principle of representation and taxation. If every man is to have a vote, and is to exercise it in secret, you will change the whole character of England, political and social. It has been tried in France and in other countries, and it has not answered, and I do not believe it will answer here. The reason why your parliament has remained so long is, that it has hitherto consisted of men to whom the great body of the country has looked up with respect. You may have a fleeting and a vagabond population in parliament. Men may come in by accident—they will go out by accident; but if a man has been long in parliament, I care not whether he be Whig, Tory, or Radical, he has some root in the sympathies of his fellow-countrymen. In France they had a parliament elected by universal suffrage, but when it did not do exactly what was wanted of it, the people rose and said, 'Who are you?—We are as good as you,' and in the end a military despotism was established, and that appears to be the only government of which that great and intelligent people are capable. I fear that if you adopt the example of other countries, where the ballot has been tried, the end will be that you will change your parliament till it become a thing that you will despise."

Not every member was as fortunate as Mr. Disraeli. Lord Palmerston had rightly interpreted the feelings of the people. The cause he advocated was one upon which it has seldom proved a bad "cry" to go to the country. It was said that the flag

of England had been insulted, that the proud name of England had been dragged through the mire by a set of miserable barbarians, and that Palmerston the stout Englishman, the true minister of England, had resolved upon avenging the honour of his country, and upon making those who had attempted to tarnish her fair fame bitterly rue their rashness. According to the eloquence of the hustings there were but two parties in the state—the one which upheld the name and pride of England, the other which was indifferent to the sublime emotions and just anger of outraged patriotism. To affirm that Sir John Bowring was in the wrong; that the government, in upholding his policy, had acted contrary to the principles of international law; that the Chinese had a perfect right to suppress piracy around their own coasts; that if the right to fly the English flag in Chinese waters was to justify misdeeds, there was nothing to prevent any junk engaged in a nefarious trade hoisting our ensign and escaping scot-free, and other similar palpable statements—was to be un-English, a craven, a sneak, and a peace-at-any-price man. If ever there was a moment when “Jingoism” was rampant throughout the country, it was when the electors of 1857 rallied round Lord Palmerston upon the Chinese question, and upheld the Liberal policy. The interference of the bully was confounded with the statesmanship of the true patriot, and resulted in a great triumph to the prime minister. “Pam” was the hero of the hour, and any one who essayed to disparage his actions was at once snubbed and suppressed. “There never, perhaps,” writes his biographer, “was a general election which turned more completely than this one of 1857 on the personal prestige of a minister and the national confidence in one man.” The aberration of the moment played sad tricks with the popularity of certain prominent members of parliament. Mr. Cobden declined to contest the West Riding, but fell back upon Huddersfield, where he was completely defeated by an

untried politician; Mr. Bright and Mr. Milner Gibson had to make room at Manchester for Messrs. Potter and Turner; Mr. Cardwell was rejected by Oxford; and Mr. Layard was left out in the cold at Aylesbury. The thin and divided ranks of the Peelites also lost many of their members. On the meeting of the Lower House it was estimated that 189 new members had been returned; that the Conservatives numbered 284, whilst the supporters of the “firebrand minister,” as Mr. Disraeli designated Lord Palmerston, were put down at 371.

Shortly after the assembling of the new parliament Mr. Disraeli was afforded an opportunity of displaying his eloquence, upon one of those domestic subjects which especially excite the loyalty of a nation. Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal had become engaged to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, and it was considered that the future marriage would result in a happiness not always consequent upon these dynastic alliances. The Princess Royal was exceedingly popular, and there was but one wish expressed throughout the country, that the union of the daughter would be attended with the same felicity as had blessed the marriage of her illustrious mother. Parliament was requested to make such provision for the princess as would be suitable to the dignity of the crown and the honour of the nation. Unfortunately there was not that unanimity in the House of Commons to be desired upon such an occasion. The chancellor of the exchequer proposed that the princess should receive a dowry of £40,000, and be the recipient of an annuity of £8000. Mr. Roebuck moved, by way of amendment, that the marriage portion should consist of a certain fixed sum, and that the annuity should be dispensed with. By voting an annuity the country, he said, might get into what was called “an endangering alliance;” and looking to the large family the nation would have to provide for, it behoved parliament to be just, though generous. Mr. Disraeli

(May 22, 1857) opposed the amendment. He confessed that the matter before the House was one of those subjects upon which unanimity was, if possible, most desirable. "I have always felt, for my own part," he said, "that the crown of England is placed in a somewhat painful position when obliged to make appeals on this or analogous subjects to the liberality of the House of Commons. But, on the other hand, it becomes us always to remember what is the cause of those appeals, and what is that power in the state which renders them necessary. It is the jealousy of parliament, carried in my opinion too far and too rigidly, which has rendered it necessary on every occasion to make those appeals to its aid and assistance, sometimes on matters comparatively insignificant. Remembering that it is the jealousy of parliament which renders such appeals necessary, it becomes us to consider them in a cordial and generous spirit." He then stated the position of the sovereign. She was deprived of sources of supply in the civil list which her grandfather had enjoyed;* she had lost the revenue derivable from the kingdom of Hanover which her predecessors had possessed; she had to maintain a splendid hospitality; yet in the past no appeal had been made in consequence of any debts incurred by the civil list. They were discussing a trivial

* At the Revolution of 1688, a limit was, for the first time, imposed upon the personal expenditure of the monarch. Formerly it had been the custom for parliament, at the beginning of each reign, to grant to the king the ordinary crown revenues, (the rent of crown lands, the feudal rights, and the proceeds of the post-office and wine licenses), and the produce of taxes voted to the sovereign for life. At the accession of William and Mary parliament fixed the annual revenue of the crown in time of peace at £1,200,000, of which some £700,000 were separately appropriated to what was afterwards called the "Civil List," comprising the personal expenses of the king, the maintenance of the royal household, and the payment of civil offices and pensions. On the accession of George III. that sovereign gave up to the nation his life-interest in the hereditary revenues in return for a fixed civil list of £800,000, afterwards increased to £900,000, "for the support of his household and the honour and dignity of the crown." William IV. surrendered the hereditary revenues and all other sources of revenue which had been enjoyed by his predecessors for a civil list of £510,000, which was to be relieved of most of the charges which belonged to the civil government of the state. On the accession of Her Majesty the civil list was settled on the same principle at the annual sum of £885,000. By this

point, and he thought they should arrive at an amicable and unanimous conclusion.

"We must not lose sight of the fact," said Mr. Disraeli, pertinently, "that if that settlement which parliament in its wisdom has thought fit to make in regard to the civil list had not occurred, the crown could have acted in this matter independently of the House, and Her Majesty would have had everything that was necessary for the maintenance and comfort of the royal family immediately at her own command. Inasmuch, however, as the jealousy of parliament in dealing with the hereditary revenues has brought about this state of affairs, it becomes us, if we feel we have a duty to discharge, always to perform that duty in a spirit of liberality and with an earnest desire that we should be unanimous when an appeal of this kind is made to us upon the responsibility of the government. Sir, I will say nothing of the circumstances under which this royal marriage is about to take place. It does not become me to speak of a personage so near the throne as the illustrious lady who is the immediate subject of this proposition. I believe, however, all will agree that she is one worthy of her family and her country, and that she is calculated to adorn the throne for which she is destined. All who have had the privilege of approaching her bear testimony to the brightness of her mind and to the

system of relieving the crown of civil charges the debts upon the civil list formerly incurred by Her Majesty's predecessors have been avoided. The question was again discussed on the marriage of Prince Arthur, when Sir Stafford Northcote, the chancellor of the exchequer, made the following observations:—"The House must bear in mind that in all these matters there has been, as has been frequently stated, something in the nature of a bargain between the crown and the parliament, by which the crown surrendered various hereditary revenues and crown lands to the public service, in exchange receiving the fixed sums which have been granted; and undoubtedly, upon comparison of what the crown might have received and the amount it did receive, it is not the crown, but the nation which has been the gainer. That is shown by an interesting return, known to many members, moved for at the commencement of the present reign. At that time Sir Robert Inglis moved for a return showing what would be the result between 1762 and 1837, and it was found that the amount of the hereditary revenues which passed to the nation was £116,000,000, whereas the amount of the civil list during the same period was £69,000,000, showing £47,000,000 going to the nation at that time. Since then, undoubtedly, the public revenues from crown lands have largely increased."

sweetness of her disposition." Pressure being put upon Mr. Roebuck, he withdrew his amendment, and the annuity was voted.

Let us, whilst on this subject, anticipate a few months. On the occasion of the congratulatory address presented by the House of Commons to the throne upon the marriage of the Princess Royal, Mr. Disraeli, in a few graceful words (February 5, 1858), seconded the motion. "I am sure, sir," he said, "that Her Majesty's faithful Commons never united in an address to the crown with more complete cordiality than they do upon the present occasion. Nothing, in my opinion, has been more remarkable or more interesting in the late unanimous expression of feeling with regard to this royal marriage, on the part of this country, than the strong domestic principle which has pervaded the whole of this great and powerful nation. That feeling is the purest, as it is the strongest, source of social happiness and national power. That general homage was offered, I am sure, on this occasion, principally because there has been a conviction on the part of the country, as the noble lord (Palmerston) will remind us, that this alliance has been brought about not so much by political considerations as from the impulses of nature and affection. That domestic feeling has been strongly exhibited in this country, on the present occasion, from the wishes that have been felt by the nation to express their attachment and respect for the royal parents of our princess; because they have long felt that, under the illustrious roof under which she has dwelt, there is as much respect felt for the happiness of the hearth as for the splendour of the throne. In the new career which opens before the Princess Royal, all those incidents which can combine for the happiness of individuals are present. She certainly bears with her the good wishes of the parliament and people of Great Britain; and when, in due season, she shall fill that brilliant position to which the noble lord has referred, I have no doubt that the

time will come when Englishmen will be as proud of the Queen of Prussia as they now are of the Queen of England."

The national rejoicing consequent upon the news of this engagement was soon damped by the most terrible intelligence which now reached London as to the state of our Indian empire. For some years past statesmen acquainted with the political and religious condition of Hindostan had warned us that among the various races which peopled our eastern peninsula discontent was rife, and that it wanted only a spark to create an explosion which would be felt throughout the country, and place our rule in the greatest jeopardy. Of late years the policy of the different governors-general had tended to excite that general feeling of dissatisfaction. We had deposed dynasties and annexed territories; we had introduced innovations in the religious customs of the people; we had gradually ousted the native element from any share in the control of affairs; and we had acted in many instances, both towards Mohammedan and Hindoo, with the cruelty and arrogance of the despotic conqueror. When men smarting under subjection, and morose from long brooding over their wrongs, resolve upon resistance, the first opportunity which offers is eagerly seized upon to effect their purpose. Such an occasion was now to be presented. At the beginning of the year a new kind of rifle—the Enfield rifle—had been introduced into Bengal for the use of the troops. Special cartridges had to be issued. It was rumoured throughout the peninsula that these cartridges were greased with a mixture of cow's fat and hog's lard. At once the fiercest indignation was excited both in the mind of the Mohammedan, who, like the Jew, regards the hog as unclean and abominable, and in the mind of the Hindoo, who looks upon the cow with especial veneration. The government took the earliest opportunity to calm this agitation by circulating orders that such cartridges were not to be employed. The countermand was useless. The rebel native

only wanted an excuse to rise against the government, and that excuse had been offered. The Bengal regiments at Barrackpore and Berhampore openly mutinied; the leaders were executed and the troops disbanded. At Meerut several of the Bengal native cavalry refused to use the cartridges handed out to them; the offenders were sent to prison. And now the first act in the drama was to be played. The native troops in Meerut broke out into open revolt, shot down their officers, released their comrades from gaol, and made an onslaught upon the inhabitants. Attacked and driven out of the town by the European soldiery, the mutineers fled to Delhi, and there proclaimed the debauched and feeble king Emperor of India, and set English rule at defiance. Rebellion, once aroused, soon assumed the most formidable proportions. By the end of June, 1857, the native troops were in open mutiny at Meerut, Delhi, Ferozepore, Allyghur, Roorkee, Mirdaun, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Nusserabad, Neemuch, Hansi, Hissar, Jhansi, Mehidpore, Jullundur, Azinghur, Futteghur, Jaunpore, Bareilly, and Allahabad. As was to be expected from the nature of the revolt, terrible atrocities were committed. Many of the stories that reached Europe were no doubt exaggerated; still, making every allowance for romance, the list of murder, rape, and mutilation was terribly full. Most of us can remember how savage was the vindictiveness with which England listened to the tale of the revolt, and how she burned to deal out the bitterest punishment to the fiends who had massacred her sons, outraged her daughters, and mutilated her young. One passion alone seemed to offer at that time any consolation—the passion of revenge: swift, sure, and almost inhuman in its cry for retribution.

For the first few weeks after the revolt and the capture of Delhi by the rebels, the news as to the extent and progress of the mutiny was brief and conflicting. Mr. Disraeli took the earliest opportunity (June 29, 1857) of catechising the government

upon the condition of the Indian empire. He had heard that the ancient capital of Hindostan was in the possession of the rebels, and he desired ministers to throw some light upon the state of affairs, and to inform the House what they proposed to do in that emergency. He wished to know what was the cause of those great disasters? Had the government been forewarned? Was the cause political or religious; had it originated in the maladministration of affairs or in some burst of fanaticism which ought to have been, perhaps, foreseen, even if it could not have been prevented? Were the civil and military authorities in India in harmony? Those were questions which the House was entitled to ask, and which the cabinet should not shrink from meeting. "No one," he said, "can for a moment shut his eyes to the extreme peril to which at this moment our authority is subject in India; but I cannot say, little as my confidence has been in the government of India, that I take those despairing or desperate views with respect to our position in that country which in moments of danger and calamity are too often prevalent. I would express my opinion—an opinion which I have before expressed in this House—that the tenure by which we hold India is not a frail tenure; but when we consider that that great country is inhabited by twenty-five nations—different in race, different in religion, and different in language—I think it is not easy, perhaps it is not possible, for such heterogeneous elements to fuse into combination. Everything, however, is possible, every disaster is practicable, if there be an inefficient or negligent government. It is to prevent such evils that I think the House of Commons is performing its highest duty, if it takes the earliest opportunity after the intelligence has arrived—intelligence which has produced great alarm in the capital of Her Majesty's empire—of inviting Her Majesty's ministers frankly to express to parliament what, in their opinion, is the cause of the great calamity that has occurred—and, above all, what are the

means which they intend to take—and at once to take—in order to encounter the peril before us, and to prevent the evil consequences which may be apprehended.”

Unfortunately the government, during the first weeks of the mutiny, failed to regard the rebellion in the serious light in which it ought to have been considered. They thought it was but a local outbreak, soon to be suppressed, instead of a widespread and powerful revolt. They were unable to grasp the real causes which had gradually led to the rebellion, and thus entertained scant sympathy with the wants and aspirations of the natives. They were tardy in the despatch of forces; they were unduly sensitive as to the expense to be incurred; and there was throughout, on their part, a lukewarmness which did not befit the occasion. A few days after having put those questions to the government, which he considered had been unsatisfactorily answered, Mr. Disraeli, under cover of a motion for certain papers, again brought the question of India (July 27, 1857) before the House. His speech on that occasion lasted three hours, and for profound acquaintance with the subject, for the lucid marshalling of facts, and for clearness and soundness of inferences drawn from premises that could not be disputed, it is one of the most eloquent and masterly expositions that have ever been contributed to a debate upon Indian affairs. The speech has never been reprinted, and will well repay not only perusal, but careful study. “I hardly know,” he began, “anything more interesting—I am sure there are few things more instructive—than to recall the commencement of great events. It is remarkable how insignificant incidents at the first blush have appeared, which have proved to be pregnant with momentous consequences. A street riot at Boston and at Paris turned out to be the two great revolutions of modern times. Who would have supposed, when we first heard of the rude visit of a Russian sailor, from a port in the Black Seas to Constantinople, that

we were on the eve of a critical war, and the solution of one of the most difficult of political problems? And so some few weeks ago, when it appeared in the newspapers that there was a mutiny in a native regiment in India, I dare say few people read the paragraph. I dare say, indeed, most persons turned for amusement to the more exciting discussions in this House on questions of domestic interest of comparative insignificance; and if the tranquil course of the House of Commons this year have not afforded them even this resource, they were perhaps more interested in the stimulating adventures of the police courts. But, sir, I have always thought if mankind could bring themselves to ponder in time on the commencement of those events that greatly affect their fortunes, it is possible that we might bring to the transaction of affairs more prudence and more energy than are generally exercised, and that probably we might prevent many public disasters.”

It was, therefore, with that object before him that he desired to introduce the subject to the attention of the House, so that they might possess a clear idea of the causes which had led to that unhappy state of things. He did not consider the statements made by the government satisfactory; and if members were of the same opinion, it became the paramount duty of parliament to fully investigate the matter. Ministers had alleged that the revolt was a mere military mutiny, which, when once suppressed, might lead to considerations as to the condition of the Indian army. But was it a military mutiny? Was it a military mutiny, or was it a national revolt? Was the conduct of the troops the consequence of a sudden impulse, or was it the result of an organized conspiracy? Upon the right appreciation of that issue the measures which the cabinet ought to adopt, or parliament ought to sanction, entirely depended. Measures which might be adequate in the case of a military mutiny, would not be adequate to cope with a national revolt. Measures which

might be perfectly competent to deal with conduct which was only the consequence of sudden impulse, would be totally insufficient to deal with conduct which was the consequence of a conspiracy long matured, deeply laid, and extensively ramified. The right understanding, by the House of Commons, of the cause of the present state of affairs in India, was a primary piece of knowledge without which they could not undertake to support any measures that were brought forward for the purpose of terminating the disorders which then existed. He would therefore, continued Mr. Disraeli, address members upon two points. He would ask them first to inquire into the causes of the present state of affairs in India; and when they had arrived at a general conclusion on that point, he would ask them to inquire what were the proper measures, under the circumstances, which should be adopted. Without full knowledge of the causes, no sufficient remedy could be suggested.

Of late years, he stated, a great change had taken place in the government of India. In the olden days, and for a considerable time, the principle of English government in India had been to respect nationality. The conquest of India had always been a favourite topic of conversation. The conquest of a country inhabited by 150,000,000 men, in many instances of warlike habits, could at no time have been an easy achievement. Still, upon that subject the popular notion was inaccurate.

"I deny, sir," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "that, in a vulgar sense of the words, we have ever conquered India. We have taken a part in the military operations which have very frequently been conducted upon a great scale in India. The annals of our warfare in India are glorious. Our arms have been victorious in many signal fields and many brilliant campaigns. We have often triumphed over powerful sovereigns, and baffled skilful and dangerous confederacies. But still our conquest of India in the main has been a conquest

of India only in the same sense in which William of Orange conquered England. We have been called in—this happened very frequently in the earlier periods of our Indian history—by populations suffering under tyranny, and we have entered those kingdoms and principalities to protect their religion and their property. It will be found, in that wonderful progress of human events which the formation of our Indian empire presents, that our occupation of any country has been preceded by a solemn proclamation and concluded by a sacred treaty, in which we undertook to respect and maintain inviolate the rights and privileges, the laws and customs, the property and religion of the people whose affairs we were about to administer. Such was the principle upon which our Indian empire was founded; and it is a proud as well as a politic passage in the history of Englishmen, that that principle has been until of late years religiously observed."

All their great Indian statesmen, continued the speaker, had always upheld the principle of maintaining the engagements entered into in proclamations and treaties. Their empire in India was, indeed, founded upon the old principle of *divide et impera*. There were in India so many independent states, so many princes of different races, so many religions, and even so many languages, that if England honestly performed her engagements it was totally impossible to raise a combination which could overwhelm her. What was the cause why the Mohammedans and the Mahrattas failed in India? Because they persecuted the people whom they had conquered on account of their religion, and because they filled their empty treasuries with the confiscated lands of the chief proprietors. England on the contrary always came in with a guarantee not to disturb the land or the faith of her Asiatic empire. It was by a policy founded upon those principles that her power in India was established. The existence of independent native states had been a source, not of embarrassment,

but of security to England; such states were the safety-valves of the empire. But unhappily of late years a new principle had been adopted in the government of India—the principle which destroyed nationality instead of respecting it. Everything in India had been changed. Laws and manners, customs and usages, political organizations, the tenure of property, the religion of the people—everything had been changed, or had aroused a suspicion that change was imminent. “Now, taking the last ten years,” said Mr. Disraeli, “I would range under three heads the various causes which have led, in my opinion, to a general discontent among all classes of that country with our rule. I would describe them thus—First, our forcible destruction of native authority; next, our disturbance of the settlement of property; and thirdly, our tampering with the religion of the people. I believe that, directly or indirectly, all the principal causes of popular discontent or popular disturbance will range under those three heads.”

That charge Mr. Disraeli proceeded exhaustively to substantiate. He dealt with the first topic—the forcible destruction of native authority. He proved that the greed of annexation had been most culpably satisfied. At the conclusion of the great wars in which India had been engaged, her financial condition was most unsatisfactory. The nature of Indian revenue was such that it admitted of no expansion; the great bulk of the revenue was raised from land, and therefore if the revenue was to be increased it was necessary to obtain more territory. That course the East India government pursued. In spite of the law of adoption, which was the very corner stone of Hindoo society, when a native prince died without natural heirs, though a son had been adopted as the successor, the government of India annexed his dominions. In that nefarious manner they had acquired the territories of Sattara, Berar, Jeitpore, Sumbulpore, Jhansi, and other principalities. Yet not content with

such a wholesale system of spoliation, they had, as in the case of Oude, to which he would again refer, annexed dominions which did not lack legitimate successors. Thus his first charge, that of the forcible destruction of native authority, had been made out.

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the second division of his subject—how the settlement of property had been disturbed by the new system of government. “Remember,” he said, “that the principle of the law of adoption is not solely the prerogative of princes and principalities in India; it applies to every man in Hindostan who has landed property, and who professes the Hindoo religion. The great feudatory or jaghedar who holds his lands by public service to his lord; and the enamdar who holds his land free of all tax, who corresponds, if not precisely, in a popular sense at least, with our freeholder—both of these classes—classes most numerous in India—always on the failure of their natural heirs find in this principle the means of obtaining successors to their estates. Those classes were all touched by the annexation of Sattara. They were touched by the annexation of the territories of the ten inferior but independent princes to whom I have already alluded; and they were more than touched, they were terrified to the last degree, when the annexation of Berar took place. What man was safe? What feudatory, what freeholder who had not a child of his own loins, was safe throughout India? These were not idle fears; they were extensively acted upon and reduced to practice.” The government determined to obtain all it could, not only from princes, but from the people. As it interfered with the rights of the princes, so it interfered with the privileges of the subjects. Much of the land in India, continued Mr. Disraeli, was free from the land tax. Freedom from the land tax in India was far more than equivalent to freedom from the land tax in England, for the land tax in India was the whole

taxation of the state, and therefore no light impost. Large portions of the land in India enjoyed that exemption, and in many instances such privilege dated back to a remote past. The government now interfered in that matter. It was alleged that there were fraudulent claims of exemption, and an inquisition into the titles of landed estates was set on foot. "Now there is no doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, "that during the last nine years the action of these commissions of inquiry into the freehold property of India has been going on at an enormous rate, and immense results have been obtained. Of course it is excessively difficult to arrive at very precise calculations on such matters, clouded in a mystery which can only be penetrated by an authorized investigation; but from information placed before me, and which I would not offer to the House unless I had confidence in it myself, I am induced to believe the amount obtained by the government of India in this manner—that is, by the resumption of estates from their proprietors—is not less, in the Presidency of Bengal alone, than £500,000 a year. Conceive what a capital is represented by such an annual revenue! Conceive the thousands and tens of thousands of estates that must have been resumed by the government from the proprietors, to obtain such a result! This is in Bengal alone; but a commission has also been issued in the Presidency of Bombay, and has been hard at work there. I have been informed—and I would not mention the results unless I had a profound conviction that they are strictly true—that the amount of freehold land resumed by the government of Bombay is not less than £370,000 a year. The Presidency of Madras remains, of which I know nothing. The north-western provinces, mapped out and surveyed, would probably, but for the recent revolt, have been subjected to the same process. I ask the House for a moment, to pause and consider what a revolution in property has been going on under the new system in

India, when a sum exceeding two-thirds of £1,000,000 sterling per annum has been obtained by the government as rental of land absolutely taken from individual proprietors. The House will see, as far as I can place before it the salient points of the question, how the system has worked. Honourable members see that the law of adoption has been abolished—a law not affecting kingdoms and principalities merely, but the tenure of land in the whole or greater part of Hindostan." And then, not content with annexing dominions on the pretence that there were no natural successors to the title, not content with annexing territories on no pretence whatever, not content with filling the exchequer by seizing private estates on the ground of fraudulent titles, the Indian government had added a further injury to the people they governed by converting hereditary pensions (on condition of paying which that government had become lord of the sovereignties, as in the case of the nabob of Arcot) into personal annuities. Those, he contended, were among the causes which had produced general discontent throughout India, and had estranged numerous and powerful classes from that authority which, on the whole, they were disposed to regard with deference.

He now approached the third point—that of tampering with the religion of the people of India. "This, I am aware," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "is one of those subjects which are called difficult and delicate; but, in my opinion, no subject is difficult or delicate when the existence of an empire is at stake, and I shall therefore address myself to this point without any undue reserve. I know that a great prejudice has been raised in this country against missionary enterprise in India; and if I could ascribe to missionary enterprise in that country any share in the production of those vast calamities which we are now considering, nothing should induce me to shrink from avowing my opinion. When, however, we hear of missionary enterprise

in India being the source and origin of these disasters and troubles, I cannot but remember that missionary enterprise is no new feature in India. At a period antecedent to the existence of our empire there were active Christian missions in India. Roman Catholic missions existed, I believe, before the successes achieved by Clive; and although our own missions are of much more modern date, their greatest efforts, their most energetic exertions have been co-existent with general satisfaction and peace among all classes in India, and with a vigorous and successful policy on the part of the government. With these facts before me, then, I must hesitate before I attribute to missionary interference any of those calamities and dangers which we are now considering. The House will pardon me for making these observations. When the country is in danger, we are very happy to seize the first plausible reason which may account for that danger; but the great object of the debate I wish to induce the House to enter upon is, to arrive at sound and safe conclusions as to the causes of the calamitous events which have occurred. I think very great error exists as to the assumed prejudices of Hindoos with regard to what is called missionary enterprise. The fact is that the Hindoos and the Indian population generally, with the exception of the Mussulmans, are educated in a manner which peculiarly disposes them to theological inquiries. There are no people who take such interest in religious discussions as the Hindoos, to the understanding of which their minds are perfectly disciplined. They are a most ancient race; they have a mass of traditions on these subjects; a complete Indian education is, in a great degree, religious; their laws, their tenure of land, depend upon religion; and there is no race in the world better armed at all points for theological discussion than they are. Add to this, that they can always fall back upon an educated priesthood prepared to supply them with arguments and illustrations when they require

such assistance. So far from the Hindoo looking with suspicion upon the missionaries, I am convinced, from what I have read and heard, that the Hindoo is at all times ready to discuss theological questions with the missionary." But, continued Mr. Disraeli, what the Hindoo did regard with suspicion was the union of missionary enterprise with the political power of the government. With that power he associated only one idea, violence. He remembered the missionary enterprise of the Mussulmans, the Koran in one hand, the sabre in the other; and although the Hindoo was perfectly ready to live upon the best terms with the missionary pure and simple, the moment he suspected that the missionary was sanctioned by the government, his most sensitive feelings were outraged. No taxation, however grievous, no injustice, however glaring, acted so dangerously on the Hindoo character as the persuasion that the authority of the crown was exercised to induce him to abandon the faith of his forefathers. Then, had the government of India lent a sanction to that suspicion of the Hindoo? Had the government taken a course which had led the mass of the people to believe that there was ground for such a suspicion? He must answer those questions in the affirmative. It appeared to him that the legislative council of India had, under the new principle, been constantly nibbling at the religious system of the natives. In establishing a national scheme of education for the Hindoos the Sacred Scriptures had suddenly appeared in the schools; "and," remarked Mr. Disraeli, "you cannot persuade the Hindoos that those holy books have appeared there without the concurrence and the secret sanction of the government." Then again, considering the peculiar ideas entertained by Hindoos with regard to women, the establishment of a system of female education in India was, in his opinion, a very unwise step on the part of the authorities. "There are, however," continued Mr. Disraeli, "other acts on the part of the government which I

regard as much more reprehensible, and which, as I shall show, have produced very evil consequences. There are two acts which have passed the legislative council of India within the last few years, and which have amazingly disturbed the religious mind of Hindostan. The first was the law which enacted that no man should be deprived of his inheritance on account of a change of religion. That has occasioned great alarm in India. The House must understand that property is inherited in India by men as trustees for sacred purposes; and if a man does not lose his property who has changed his religion, some of the principal ends and duties of that inheritance cannot be fulfilled. That is a change in the law which has created much alarm and suspicion. But there is also another law which has, if possible, more alarmed the feelings of the Hindoos, and that is the permission to a Hindoo widow to marry a second husband. What could have induced the governor-general of India to pass such a law it is, at this moment, difficult to conceive. If there had been any great feeling on the subject among the Hindoo community, one could have comprehended the reason; but as I am informed, no man or woman among them ever expressed any desire in favour of a change, which is looked upon by all as an outrage on their faith. These two laws have, to my mind, more than any other cause, disquieted the religious feelings of the Hindoos, and prepared their minds for recent lamentable events."

And then the government had committed a further blunder. The temper of India was one of peril; yet it was under those circumstances—it was with the great body of the princes alarmed, and the most powerful classes of the proprietors smarting under grievances—it was even in the midst of usurpation and confiscation, added to religious terror first touching the great mass of the working population, that an event occurred in India to which the gravest consequences might be attached. The govern-

ment annexed Oude. There was no excuse for such appropriation. The principle of adoption was not involved, for the ruler of Oude was a Mohammedan prince. The annexation of Oude did not take place in consequence of the alleged infraction of any treaty by the sovereign of Oude, for that dynasty had always proved itself a faithful ally of the government. And now what had been the result of that falsest of moves? "The moment," said Mr. Disraeli, "the throne of Oude was declared vacant the English troops poured in; the royal treasury was ransacked, and the furniture and jewels of the king and his wives were seized. From that instant the Mohammedan princes were all alienated. For the first time the Mohammedan princes felt that they had an identity of interest with the Hindoo rajahs. From that moment they threw aside the sullen pride of former conquerors who would not condescend to sympathize with the victims of Sattara. They saw that from a system founded upon a violation of Hindoo law they were not to be exempted. The moment that the throne of Oude, occupied by its king, was declared vacant, and English troops were poured into his territory, the Mohammedan princes understood what would be their future fate. You see how the plot thickens. You have the whole of the Indian princes—men of different races and different religions—men between whom there were traditionary feuds and long and enduring prejudices, with all the elements to produce segregation—become united—Hindoos, Maharattas, Mohammedans—secretly feeling a common interest and a common cause. Not only the princes, but the proprietors are against you. Estates as well as musnuds are in danger. You have an active society spread all over India, alarming the ryot, the peasant, respecting his religious faith. Never mind on this head what were your intentions; the question is, what were their thoughts—what their inferences?"

And, continued the critic, the annexation

resulted in more than all these dangers. The Bengal army was largely recruited by the subjects of the king of Oude, soldiers sprung from what in England corresponded with the yeomanry, and enjoying special privileges. To a man the Oude sepoy, finding himself robbed of his country and deprived of his privileges, became mutinous and discontented. He schemed, and plotted, and sent mysterious symbols from village to village, which prepared the native mind to be ready for the overthrow of the British yoke. The mutiny was no more a sudden impulse than the income tax was a sudden impulse. It was the result of careful combinations, vigilant and well organized, on the watch for opportunity. The people of India—their princes deposed, their religion insulted, their soldiers discontented—only waited for an occasion and a pretext; and the occasion was soon furnished, and the pretext soon devised. The new cartridges were sent out, and the mine long and skillfully laid exploded. "I will not go into the question," said Mr. Disraeli contemptuously, "as to whether the cartridges complained of are the same as have always been used, as we have been told is the case. I do not suppose any one will after this discussion suppose that, because the cartridges were believed to be, or were pretended to be believed to be, greased with pig's fat or cow's fat, that was the cause of this insurrection. The decline and fall of empires are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes, and by an accumulation of adequate causes."

He had set forth the reasons which had led to the revolt they now so deeply lamented: it only remained for him to inquire what were the means which the government ought to adopt to meet the emergency. In the present state of affairs, they were all agreed that the employment of force was the first and necessary step. A mere military mutiny might be met by a mere military effort; but with an insurrection, supported by the

favour and sympathy of the great mass of the population, deeper and more stringent measures must be employed. He did not consider the troops about to be sent out to India a sufficient force to cope with the present circumstances. The efforts of the government should be on a much greater scale. There should be an advance from Calcutta through Bengal and an expedition up the Indus. The militia should be called out and embodied; ministers should embrace a larger and more vigorous policy than they had hitherto seemed to intimate or recommend. Every effort should be exerted to save an endangered empire. With a united parliament and a strong government, the difficulties by which they were now menaced could be checked and conquered; and in bringing forward that question, it was his wish to show to Europe and Asia that it was not the object of the British parliament to overthrow a cabinet, but to save an empire.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded his powerful speech, and in his remarks as to justice being tempered with mercy at such a moment, when the heart of England was raging with the most vindictive hate against "the niggers," we see how true and well-balanced a statesman was the late leader of the Opposition, and how superior was his political philosophy to any pandering to the blind and savage passions of the hour. "I have made these observations," he said, "as to the question of force, and I should not have ventured to make any criticism upon the acts of the government upon this subject, if I had been able to agree with them as to the causes of the disturbance. But to my mind, that is not all that we ought to look to. Even if we do vindicate our authority with complete success—revenge the insults we have received, rebuild the power that has been destroyed—it appears to me that we have still a very great and responsible task before us, for it is impossible to drive from our consideration, not merely the future of India, but

also the present condition and feeling of the great mass of the population of that country. We may pour our legions and our fleets up the rivers and through the provinces of India; we may be successful; but to my mind we should add to that success, and doubly strengthen our force; and I am prepared for one to give any support to Her Majesty's government which they may require for that purpose, if at the same time we should say to India that supposes she is aggrieved and outraged, to India perhaps despairing of pardon, 'Although we will assert with the highest hand our authority—although we will not rest until our unquestioned supremacy and predominance are acknowledged from the Punjaub to Cape Comorin—it is not merely as avengers we appear.' I think that the great body of the population of that country ought to know that there is for them a future of hope. I think we ought to temper justice with mercy—justice the most severe with mercy the most indulgent.

"But how are you to do that? What step are you prepared to take? How are you going, let me ask, to govern India when, as I have heard, it has been circulated on the highest authority that the native army of Bengal no longer exists? Has the House well considered the consequences of so easily saying that, as the native army of Bengal has no longer any existence, we should substitute for it English regiments? I do not wish to view the question as one of finance. This country is in a condition at the present moment which will not permit us to dwell upon such considerations; but it is a question not to be lost sight of or blinked. But suppose you had 100,000 or 200,000 Englishmen in India, could you govern India with their aid? You might as well talk of governing India with the House of Commons. Why, the assumption that you are to have an army of Europeans to govern India involves a complete revolution, both in your external policy and in your internal administration in that part of the world. How are you to invade

kingdoms like Pegu—how are you to conquer countries like the Punjaub—merely with men of English constitution? How could they journey through those burning deserts and perform those duties which now are with facility accomplished by the native troops? You could not do it. Look at the condition of our English regiments in India. We have been obliged to guard them and protect them from the influence of the climate up to the moment of those battles which they have been called upon to fight, and which they have invariably won. Well, then, as to your foreign policy? With such a system it would no longer exist. There must be no more annexations, no more conquest. You must entirely change all your relations with the states conterminous with your Indian empire. But look at your internal administration. Can you levy your revenue with English troops? Are English troops to be stationed at every outpost? Are they to escort the money from your treasuries? Are they to perform all those duties which now are with facility performed by those whose habits and organization adapt them to live and work in that country? It is totally impossible that you can ever govern 150,000,000 of men in India by merely European agency. You must meet that difficulty boldly and completely.

"Well, then, the course which I recommend is this:—You ought at once, whether you receive news of success or defeat, to tell the people of India that the relation between them and their real ruler and sovereign, Queen Victoria, shall be drawn nearer. You must act upon the opinion of India on that subject immediately; and you can only act upon the opinion of eastern nations through their imagination. You ought to have a royal commission sent by the queen from this country to India immediately to inquire into the grievances of the various classes of that population. You ought to issue a royal proclamation to the people of India declaring that the Queen of England is not a sovereign who

will countenance the violation of treaties—that the Queen of England is a sovereign who will not disturb the settlement of property—that the Queen of England is a sovereign who will respect their laws, their usages, their customs, and, above all, their religion. Do this, and do this not in a corner, but in a mode and manner which will attract universal attention and excite the general hope of Hindostan, and you will do as much as all your fleets and armies can achieve. But to do this you must act with vigour; you must send to that country competent men—men of high station and ability, such as would entitle them to such office—and who shall appear in Hindostan in the queen's name and with the queen's authority. If that be done, simultaneously with the arrival of your forces, you may depend upon it that your military advance will be facilitated, and, I believe, your ultimate success insured."

This speech gave rise to much criticism, both adverse and favourable. It was said that there was no evidence to prove that the mutiny was a national revolt; no native prince had been concerned in it, and there was no proof as to any conspiracy among the native princes. Between the recent annexations and the mutiny there was no connection whatever. The people of India were not in the slightest degree oppressed; the true reason for the present state of things was that too much faith had been placed in Indian troops, and in troops of one particular kind. So far from the mutiny being a national revolt, the simple truth was that where there were no sepoys there had been no revolt. Instead of the land-

owners being discontented, they had freely offered their aid to the government. In spite, however, of these denials, as the mutiny progressed it became very evident that Mr. Disraeli had accurately fathomed the causes which had led to the rebellion—the native princes allied themselves with the foe, the landowners were our enemies, and the Hindoo fought on desperately, believing his creed and his customs were in danger—and when peace was restored, many of the grievances he brought forward were either redressed or greatly mitigated. Especially was it true that the annexation of Oude had utterly alienated the loyalty of the Bengal sepoy from the government. When Her Majesty was created Empress of India this able speech foreshadowed the policy that was to be pursued.

Parliament was prorogued August 28, 1857. In the speech of the lords commissioners special allusion was made to the mutiny. "Her Majesty commands us to inform you," they said, addressing both Houses, "that the extensive mutinies which have broken out among the native troops of the army of Bengal, followed by serious disturbances in many parts of that presidency, have occasioned to Her Majesty extreme concern; and the barbarities which have been inflicted upon many of Her Majesty's subjects in India, and the sufferings which have been endured, have filled Her Majesty's heart with the deepest grief; while the conduct of many civil and military officers who have been placed in circumstances of much difficulty, and have been exposed to great danger, has excited Her Majesty's warmest admiration."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSERVATIVE REACTION.

THE manner in which we conducted our preliminary operations against the Sepoy was after the usual fashion in which we are given to begin hostilities, when dealing with an enemy we consider an inferior power. We undervalued public peril; we failed to appreciate the strength and ability of the foe; we were slow to avail ourselves of the communications of the moment; we deemed the struggle to be one of short duration, and that the force we then possessed was sufficient to crush a revolt which would speedily be suppressed. Yet the Indian mutiny was a graver resistance than had been anticipated, and taxed all the energies of the authorities, both at home and in the peninsula, to cope with the difficulties which surrounded them, and at one time almost threatened to overwhelm them. Martial law was proclaimed throughout India, our transports in rapid succession landed troops for active service in the mutinous provinces, and distinguished officers displayed on every occasion the accustomed gallantry of their nation. Still, the rebellion plainly proved, as Mr. Disraeli had contended, that the rise was a national, and not merely a military revolt. The siege of Delhi was long and arduous. The Residency at Lucknow was closely beset by the mutineers. Cawnpore was in revolt, and preparing one of the most hideous revenges that the annals of treachery and massacre have ever had to record. City after city fell into the hands of the rebels, and British authority was openly set at defiance. The work of re-conquest was no slight effort; but happily, though little thanks to the government at home, it was successfully carried through. The victories at Sealcote and Bithoor showed

the turn of the tide; successes soon followed up by the battles of Pandoo Nuddee and Nujffghur; Delhi was stormed and captured, its king taken captive, and the three royal princes of the house of Timour shot down by the hand of the impetuous and redoubtable Hodson, of Hodson's Horse. The besieged Residency at Lucknow had been rescued from the rebels, and Cawnpore had been retaken. Before the close of the year which had seen the rise of the revolt, it was unofficially announced that the "neck of the mutiny was broken."

Whilst these terrible scenes were being acted in the cities and plains of our Indian peninsula, affairs at home had drifted into one of those commercial panics which, according to the statistics of economists, must periodically occur. Failure after failure was announced; firm after firm, hitherto considered solvent, fell into bankruptcy; and banks, one after the other, suspended payment. A reign of commercial terror had been ushered in, caused by the derangement of the American trade supervening upon previous inconveniences created by the mutiny, by the disturbance of the Indian trade, and the wild speculations then being carried on in continental capitals. The first to fall was the Borough Bank of Liverpool, with liabilities estimated at £5,000,000; afterwards the house of Denistoun, largely engaged in the American trade, failed for upwards of £2,000,000; and then followed the collapse of the Scotch banks—the Western Bank of Scotland and the City of Glasgow Bank—bringing down in the crash a host of smaller firms. A worse day than the memorable "Black Friday" had arrived. The Bank of England is the financial

barometer on these terrible occasions. Between October 10 and November 18, the bullion in the bank fell from £10,110,000 to £6,484,000; while the reserve of notes fell during that period from about £4,500,000 to about £1,400,000. For some months previously to this date the foreign drain of bullion was accompanied by an adverse state of the exchanges, and a high rate of discount at the bank. On April 2 the rate of interest was at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; on June 18, at 6 per cent.; on July 16, at $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; on October 8, again at 6 per cent.; on October 12, at 7 per cent.; on October 19, at 8 per cent.; on November 5, at 9 per cent.; and on November 9, at 10 per cent.

So grave was the condition of affairs that government felt bound to repeat the interference of 1847, and suspend the Bank Act. Accordingly, on November 12, a joint letter was addressed by Lord Palmerston and Sir George Cornewall Lewis, the chancellor of the exchequer, to the directors of the Bank of England, by which authority was given to the bank to issue an amount of notes not exceeding £2,000,000 in excess of the proportion allowed by the Act. To understand the nature of this permission it is necessary to be acquainted with the operations of the statute enrolled by Sir Robert Peel. In the course of his long political career Sir Robert had induced the legislature to agree to two important Acts relating to the currency. The first Act was passed in 1819; it restored the currency to its proper metallic basis, and established the convertibility of the bank note. After that Act had been passed, the power of the Bank of England to issue notes was unlimited in point of extent; subject only to the condition of being payable in gold on demand. The power of establishing country banks in England was also unlimited, subject to the privilege which then existed in favour of the Bank of England with reference to partnerships of more than six partners. Such banks, when established, could create any quantity

of bank notes. Under that law any person could found a bank, and issue notes payable to bearer on demand, provided only that those notes were paid in specie upon presentation at the bank which issued them. The same power existed both in Scotland and Ireland.

Such was the state of the law from 1819 to 1844, when Sir Robert Peel introduced his second important Act on the currency. That second Act was to be the complement of the first, and to secure that convertibility of the note which was made legal only by the Act of 1819. It enabled the Bank of England to issue notes on securities to the extent of £14,000,000, together with any further sum which might be required from the lapsed circulation of the English country banks, as to which some detailed provisions were introduced into the Act. It divided the Bank of England into two departments—the issue and the banking departments. And with regard to English country banks, it prohibited any new country bank from issuing notes at all, whilst the country banks existing at the time of the passing of the Act were limited in their issue to the circulation which they then possessed. Similar restrictions were enforced as to the banks in Scotland and Ireland. In establishing this measure the main object which Sir Robert Peel had in view was to provide a security against the excessive issue of paper, and thus to guard against the recurrence of those commercial panics under which the country had at different intervals suffered previously to 1844. He, however, carefully protected himself from pretending that his measure was a panacea against such panics, for he stated that the issue of bank paper was only one of the causes of panic, and commercial disasters might arise from causes which did not lie within the scope of his legislation. During the panic of 1847 Sir Robert Peel thus defended his scheme:—"I say that the bill of 1844 had a triple object. Its first object was that in which I admit it has

failed, viz., to prevent by early and gradual, severe and sudden contraction, and the panic and confusion inseparable from it. But the bill had two other objects of at least equal importance—the one to maintain and guarantee the convertibility of the paper currency into gold, the other to prevent the difficulties which arise at all times from undue speculation being aggravated by the abuse of paper credit in the form of promissory notes. In these two objects my firm belief is that the bill has completely succeeded. My belief is that you have had a guarantee for the maintenance of the principle of convertibility such as you never had before; my belief also is that whatever difficulties you are now suffering from a combination of various causes, those difficulties would have been greatly exaggerated if you had not wisely taken the precaution of checking the unlimited issue of the notes of the Bank of England, of joint-stock banks, and private banks."

The effect of the issue of the government letter to the directors of the bank at this critical moment was, according to the chancellor of the exchequer, favourable. "It diminished alarm," he said, "and restored confidence: and it did not in the smallest degree endanger the convertibility of the note, because a favourable turn of the exchange had taken place, and there was at the time no fear of a foreign drain of gold. If that authority had not been given, it is certain that the only measure to which the bank could have resorted for its own protection would have been the immediate and total cessation of discounts." This stretch of ministerial prerogative, however, called upon the government to demand a bill of indemnity from the legislature, and the Houses were hastily summoned. Parliament met December 3, 1857, and it was understood that its deliberations would be almost exclusively confined to the necessary measures in connection with the Bank Act. The session was opened by Her Majesty in person, who gave in her speech from

the throne the following reasons for the assembling of the Houses:—

"Circumstances have recently arisen connected with the mercantile interests of the country, which have induced me to call parliament together before the usual time. The failure of certain joint stock banks and of some commercial firms produced such an extent of distrust as led me to authorize my ministers to recommend to the directors of the Bank of England the adoption of a course of proceeding which appeared necessary for allaying the prevalent alarm. As that course has involved a departure from the existing law, a bill for indemnifying those who advised and those who adopted it will be submitted for your consideration." Other subjects were also touched upon. The continuation of the mutiny was deplored, and the gallantry of the troops engaged in its suppression specially remarked upon. Europe was congratulated upon the general peace which reigned. A treaty had been concluded with Persia, and Herat had been evacuated. Then as to the details of future legislation, the attention of the Houses was to be directed to "the laws which regulate the representation of the people in parliament, with a view to consider what amendments may be safely and beneficially made therein;" also the laws relating to real property were to be amended, and several branches of the criminal law consolidated.

Upon the motion of the address Mr. Disraeli (December 3, 1857) exhaustively criticised the different clauses in the royal speech, and commented severely upon the conduct of ministers. He complained of the government not having made itself sooner acquainted with the state of the commercial world, and thus have obviated the extreme course which had been adopted. The House had been asked to grant a bill of indemnity to ministers for having violated an existing law. It was too often the fashion of the House, when a bill of indemnity was the question, to treat it as a very light matter. It was generally sup-

posed that, when such a bill was asked for, it would be conceded as a matter of course, that no opposition would be attempted, and therefore it was a matter which was treated lightly. Yet the fact was that a bill of indemnity was of so grave a character, that it should never be so treated. When accorded, it should be accorded liberally and even generously, but never lightly. Ten years ago, under similar circumstances, a bill of indemnity had been asked for and had been granted. To repeat that sanction they had now assembled. Before complying with such a request, he thought it should be the duty of parliament to require a frank declaration from the government of the circumstances which had induced them to recommend their policy, and of the reasons which they believed sufficient to render the pursuance of that policy necessary. He regretted that the chancellor of the exchequer had stated that he would move for a committee to consider the operation of the Bank Charter Act of 1844. "Now," said Mr. Disraeli, "we shall be doing exactly what we did in 1847. In 1847 the country was panic-struck and half ruined. Parliament was called together, and the country looked to it for the expression of some distinct opinion. A committee was appointed. Ten years have elapsed. The same occurrence takes place. Parliament is again called together; and what is parliament, and what are ministers—the most influential members of parliament—about to do in the difficulty? Again they are going to evade doing that which is the duty of every statesman in this country—to lay down in this House the opinion which they have formed on this subject, and to call on the House to maintain that opinion. Instead of that—and I deeply regret it—we are to have another committee on the Bank Charter Act of 1844; and I suppose that in 1867, after a repetition of the same mischance and the same miseries, the same fruitless and bootless process will be adopted of appointing a committee on that subject in this House."

Three committees, continued Mr. Disraeli, had already been appointed, and yet nothing definite had resulted from their deliberations. A crash came, and lo! another committee was to be appointed. Such a shifting and evasive course should not be pursued. A currency established upon just principles exercised the most general influence that could affect society, and the government should have made up their minds upon the subject. It was not a question of inquiry, but of action. Were ministers going to stand by the Bank Charter Act, or were they not? That was the question the country wished them to answer. If ministers were going to stand by the Act, then he, personally, should hesitate before granting the bill of indemnity, because he did not think they were then justified in departing from the letter of the law. If, on the other hand, ministers were not going to stand by the Bank Act—if they had a policy, if they came forward and said they were prepared to make amendments with respect to that Act, and because they were convinced that such amendments were necessary, they did not hesitate at a moment of emergency to recommend the suspension of the law—then, said Mr. Disraeli, the bill of indemnity should be granted without reserve or reluctance, and the House wait for the proposition the government would make. But if, after all the country had gone through, they were to do exactly that which they were doing before those commercial difficulties occurred, it appeared to him that they should forfeit the confidence and respect of the country. Was the Bank Charter Act of 1844 to be upheld as it then stood? Was it to be amended, or was it to be abandoned? Those were questions ministers should frankly answer. In his opinion nothing was more injurious to the principles of currency than to allow a law to exist which, in moments of emergency, was always suspended, and which, in moments of tranquillity, was always submitted for investigation to parliamentary committees.

Mr. Disraeli then commented upon the other clauses in the royal speech. He was amusingly sarcastic upon the paragraph which stated that "the nations of Europe are in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, which nothing seems likely to disturb." "Now, several of my hon. friends," he said with humorous gravity, "have put upon this passage an interpretation that may be correct, but which I, taking a more hopeful view, can scarcely suppose to be accurate. They seem to think that something like an expression of regret is conveyed in that paragraph, as if the noble lord (Palmerston) had said, 'I have done all I could to get up a difficulty with the European powers, but I am sorry to say I have not succeeded. We are still at peace; and I am able to bring before you nothing, really nothing, that promises to disturb the universal tranquillity;' as though, in that bold language which renders the noble lord at all times popular, he said, 'I have done my best, but for this once the turbulent and aggressive policy has failed. I cannot help it, but we are in for it; we are at present all at peace.' That, however, is not my interpretation of the words." After the laughter which this remark occasioned had subsided, Mr. Disraeli alluded to the heroic efforts of the troops in India in terms of warm and graceful homage. Their empire in India had been saved by the army—saved, too, by an army which the House must never forget owed nothing to cabinets in London or to councils in Calcutta. "Alone they did it."

What struck him more than anything else throughout these extraordinary transactions, continued the leader of the Opposition, was the total unpreparedness of all who were responsible for the government and the condition of that great empire. He had alluded to the subject before; and how fatally had all his predictions been fulfilled! He had said that the primary and proximate cause of the insurrection had been the annexation of Oude.

That statement was then received with derisive amazement; yet, now, however multifarious the controversies as to the various causes, was there any point on which men were more agreed than that among the chief and certain causes of that widely-spread revolt was the annexation of Oude? He had said that the mutiny was not a military revolt, but a national rise; and had his words not proved true? He blamed the government for their lack of prescience, and their tardy preparations. They had quitted Oude—a recently annexed kingdom, with all the elements of danger in a discontented aristocracy and a disbanded army—totally uncared for. With the news of a mutiny ringing in their ears, yet they had left a place like Delhi in the hands of a sepoy garrison! What had been the consequence of such want of foresight and activity? The whole of their communications had been cut off between Calcutta and the north-western provinces. And why? Because they had not thought of Oude. An insurrection raged in Oude and the provinces connected with it; and the massacre of Cawnpore and the siege of Lucknow had been entirely due to the blunders of the cabinet. The large army they had massed together at Calcutta was unable to advance into the interior owing to the state of Oude—the Oude which, under other circumstances, always furnished the means of transport. He wished to know what the government proposed to do with regard to India—they could not treat it as the Bank Charter, and refer it to a select committee. Did they intend to propose a new form of administration? Were they about to condemn the double government? Was parliament to legislate for India? And was a new form of government to be devised for that country? Those were questions the country expected ministers to answer.

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by remarking upon the proposals announced as to parliamentary reform. He hoped that, when such a measure was introduced, it

would be devised fairly for the public weal, and not to increase the political following of any particular party. There need be no delay in the matter. As they had a reform ministry, a reform minister, and a reform bill, let the House by all means have the bill brought before it at once, so that members might take ample time for the consideration of its clauses.

In a brief reply Lord Palmerston defended the cabinet as to the course it had pursued, both with regard to the suspension of the Bank Act and the supervision of affairs in India, and declined to introduce the subject of reform before Christmas. The address to the throne was then agreed to.

On the following day, when the chancellor of the exchequer had, in a lucid and elaborate speech, carried out his intention of proposing that the House should resolve itself into a committee to consider the Bank Act, Mr. Disraeli again spoke upon the subject. He wished to offer a few suggestions, he said, as to what might be the causes of the prevailing commercial distress and distrust. That distress was general. It was not confined to England; it existed in the United States; and its influence was felt in Germany, in Austria, in Prussia, and in Denmark. The commercial transactions of Europe were carried on, not by millions, but by hundreds of millions; therefore it was a great error to suppose that the management of a limited portion of the currency of England could have occasioned such immense disaster; that disaster was due to the mismanagement of the capital of Europe, and not to the mismanagement of English currency. He must direct their attention to one point. The Bank Act was an Act to regulate the currency of England; its purpose was irreproachable, its object one which every man ought to wish to secure. Yet it was a fact that the Act greatly aggravated commercial distress when it was occasioned by the misapplication, not of English currency, but of the general capital of the world. That was a

point which had never been considered, and yet it was one which could be fully established. Owing to the Bank Act—intended merely as a currency Act, and to have a limited application—managers of the currency of England had been forced to treat in an identical manner, and by the same means, two circumstances totally opposite in their character, and both exercising an injurious influence on English commerce and capital—a foreign drain and a domestic drain. Yet, if there was anything which could be established by argument and an appeal to fact, it was that the two sets of circumstances should be treated in an exactly contrary manner, and be encountered by means exactly opposite. They should, therefore, gravely consider the question without fear of being accused of wishing to tamper with the standard of value, or to inundate the country with paper money. They must not conceal from themselves that they had a law intended only to act on English currency—excellent so far as the principle it asserted was concerned—yet whenever commercial distress occurred, was found to be oppressive, and in seasons of great emergency had to be suspended. The question, therefore, naturally arose, what was the effect of allowing the currency of the country to be regulated by an Act which they were in a continual state of being prepared to suspend? Were they to sanction a chronic state of suspension? Were they to uphold a law of such a character that those who were acting under it knew, that when an emergency arose, it would not be enforced?

It was said that the Bank Act was a considerable check upon over-speculation and an inflated currency, which in times of prosperity abounded. But eminent financial authorities had contradicted that assertion. It had been held by great economists that the depreciation of a bank note convertible at par was a simple impossibility, that it was quite out of the power of any bank to issue beyond the requirements of the country, and that no issue of bank notes

at any time had affected the prices of commodities. The Act, he maintained, must be either upheld on every occasion, or amended. To sanction dispensing power at the arbitrary will of a minister was most unwise, and might give rise to the grossest favouritism. It was a responsibility almost beyond the endurance of any individual, and one totally alien to the character of the constitution of the country. England had thought a dispensing power with regard to civil and political rights intolerable, and had changed a dynasty rather than submit to it; and was she now prepared to extend to a minister such a power with regard to a subject which touched the country perhaps more nearly than either civil or political rights? Where commercial and monetary interests were concerned, were they prepared to submit quietly to a dispensing power, the exercise of which, even when most virtuously employed, might be unjust in its application and ruinous in its results? The difficulty ought to be solved. He would not, continued Mr. Disraeli, oppose the bill of indemnity, since the bank directors were implicated in the matter; and it would be cowardly and vindictive on his part to throw any obstacle in the way of their indemnity. But the time had come when the question must be settled. What was the use of a government if it could not settle that question? What was the use of a House of Commons if it could not animate and inspire a cabinet to settle that question? He would not be content with simply destructive criticism, but he would recommend a policy. Mr. Disraeli concluded by stating that, on the night when the chancellor of the exchequer introduced his motion to refer the working of the Bank Act to a select committee, it would be his duty, as leader of the Opposition, to move, as an amendment, that it was expedient to legislate upon the subject without further inquiry.

Sir Cornewall Lewis having assented to this proposition, the motion was agreed

to, and leave given to bring in the bill. A few days afterwards (December 11, 1857), Mr. Disraeli rose up to fulfil his pledge. In opposition to the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, he proposed as an amendment, "That in the opinion of this House no further inquiry is necessary into the operation of the Bank Act of 1844." He repeated very much the same arguments as he had raised on the two previous occasions. In his opinion it was the duty of the House to arrive at a definite conclusion upon the subject, and not to assent to a motion for the reappointment of a committee which would close the mouths of members and be an obstacle out of doors. He entered at length into the question of the depreciation of paper money. There was a distinction between paper money and paper credit; inconvertible paper money might be depreciated, but not notes convertible at par. Then from his views of paper currency he deduced conclusions at variance with the theory upon which their monetary legislation was based, and he argued that the failure of joint-stock banks had nothing to do with their bank-note circulation. The Bank Act of 1844 had been drawn up in deference to the fallacious principles respecting issues that then prevailed, and consequently it had exercised an aggravating influence upon commercial distress when it arose. His great objection to that Act was, that it paralyzed circulation. It applied to all circumstances, however different, exactly the same treatment. He did not expect them to legislate upon the subject before Christmas; but he hoped the House would come to this conclusion, that "though we are not in favour of precipitate legislation at a moment when every one knows perfectly well that it is impossible to legislate, yet that the materials for legislation are in our possession, and that in due season, and with due deliberation, we will address ourselves to the solution of this great public difficulty." Let the House, he said, decline to delegate its functions to a select committee, and

show the country that it was equal to the fulfilment of a great public duty.

The amendment of Mr. Disraeli was negatived by 295 to 117, and the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer was agreed to. The feeling of the House was not in favour of repealing the Act of 1844, but of amending it; such amendment, it considered, could best be devised from the labours of a select committee. The various opinions that had been expressed, it was thought, did not augur favourably for the success of any measure which might be proposed without further inquiry. The business for which parliament had been summoned having thus been despatched, both Houses adjourned for the Christmas recess, the day fixed for their re-assembling being February 4, 1858.

Before this event took place, one of the most determined attempts which political fanaticism has ever incited had been made to assassinate the Emperor of the French as he was being driven to the opera with the empress. Scarcely had the imperial carriage entered the Rue Lepelletier than a bomb, hurled by some unknown hand, fell beneath the wheels and instantly exploded. By a miracle none of the occupants of the carriage were hurt, though several of the bystanders, awaiting the arrival of the emperor and empress, were blown to pieces. A second bomb was now thrown, killing one of the horses, and bringing the carriage to a sudden stop. The delay was at once taken advantage of by the miscreants, and a third bomb fell beneath the carriage, almost shivering it to atoms, and for the third time the imperial couple escaped sudden death. The empress was unhurt, and save a slight cut on the nose by a piece of glass, the emperor passed out of the explosion unscathed. The police at once came to the rescue. A man who had rushed forward with a dagger and revolver to finish the work in which the infernal machines had failed was instantly seized, and in spite of a desperate struggle, safely captured. His fate was followed by

another man, a refugee called Pierri, who was caught with a bomb in his hand similar to those which had been recently thrown. On the following morning Felice Orsini, an Italian exile, was apprehended, and it was discovered that he was the organizer of the plot and leader of the band who had vowed to revenge themselves upon the Emperor of the French for his desertion, as they thought, of the cause of Italian emancipation.

The murderous attempt was the sensation of the hour, and as the examination of the conspirators proceeded, every detail was listened to with the keenest avidity. It now transpired that Orsini and his accomplices had matured their hateful idea in England, that they had for some time been living in London, and that the bombs had been manufactured in Birmingham, and had been ordered for Orsini by an Englishman. It also came out that one Simon Bernard, a Frenchman charged with the same offence as Orsini, had long been living in London, and was even now quietly permitted to continue his residence there. A cry of the bitterest indignation was consequently raised by excitable France against the England which repaid the services of the French alliance in the Crimea by harbouring assassins and manufacturing articles for the fell purpose of putting friendly sovereigns to a cruel and violent death. This feeling was given expression to by Count Walewski, the minister of foreign affairs at Paris, who in a despatch to the Duke de Persigny, the French ambassador at London, inquired whether England deemed hospitality due to such miscreants. "It is no longer," he wrote, "the hostility of misguided parties manifesting itself by all the excesses of the press and every violence of language; it is no longer even the labour of factions seeking to agitate opinion and to provoke disorder: it is assassination reduced to a doctrine, preached openly, practised in repeated attempts, the most recent of which has struck Europe with stupefaction. Ought, then, the right

of asylum to protect such a state of things? Is hospitality due to assassins? Shall English legislation serve to favour their designs and their manœuvres? And can it continue to protect persons who place themselves by flagrant acts without the pale of the common laws? . . . Full of confidence in the exalted reason of the English cabinet, we abstain from all indication as regards the measures which it may be suitable to take. We rely on them for a careful appreciation of the decision which they shall judge most proper, and we congratulate ourselves in the firm persuasion that we shall not have appealed in vain to their conscience and their loyalty."

The more France reflected upon the conduct of England, the hotter and more vindictive became the national passion. Addresses of congratulation poured in upon the emperor from his army; and in the wording of many of them there were the most offensive allusions to our country, as the asylum of all that was base and monstrous. In the address of the 5th Lancers it was said, "The army is afflicted that powerful friends, whose brave armies so lately fought by our side, should, under the name of hospitality, protect conspirators and assassins surpassing those who have gone before them in all that is odious." In the address of the 59th Regiment the colonel cried, "In our manly hearts indignation against the perverse, succeeding to our gratitude to God, moves us to demand an account from the land of impurity which contains the haunts of the monsters who are sheltered by its laws. Give us the order, sire, and we will pursue them even to their strongholds!" The fiery colonel of the Rouen division exclaimed, "Let the miserable assassins, the subordinate agents of such crimes, receive the chastisement due to their abominable attempts; but let also the infamous haunt in which machinations so infernal are planned be destroyed for ever!" Several of these addresses were inserted in the *Moniteur*, the official organ of the French government, and therefore, when they thus

appeared, were regarded by England as insults specially sanctioned by the emperor. It afterwards appeared that these passionate expressions had been inserted in the newspaper by inadvertence. Lord Palmerston, in the House of Commons, stated that Count Walewski had ordered the Duke de Persigny to say, "that although the practice was a universal practice to publish addresses of the French army, if in two or three addresses out of many hundreds some passages were allowed to be printed to which objections had been taken in England, that circumstance must have arisen from the inadvertence of those who had the charge of publishing those addresses, and that he was ordered on the part of the emperor to state that he regretted such publication." Still, in spite of this apology, the feeling between England and France was for the moment bitterer than it had been since Waterloo.

According to our common law, it is a misdemeanour for a number of British subjects to combine and conspire together to excite rebellion among the inhabitants of a friendly state; and as an instance of parliamentary assent to the principle of this doctrine, Lord Palmerston (February 8, 1858) introduced his Conspiracy to Murder Bill. Circumstances arose, he said, from time to time, which pointed to the necessity or expediency of revising particular laws. An event of that nature had recently happened. A conspiracy had been formed, partly in this country, to commit an atrocious crime. He had no intention of introducing a bill to remove aliens on mere suspicion; but having strong reason to believe that a conspiracy to murder had been partially concocted here, he was anxious to consider the state of the law upon the subject. Conspiracy to murder was a misdemeanour, and punishable by fine and imprisonment. In Ireland it was treated as a capital offence. He therefore proposed to make conspiracy to murder a felony, punishable with penal servitude, and to apply it to all persons with respect

to conspiracies to murder, wherever intended. "I cannot but think," he said, in conclusion, "that the provisions of the bill will have a decisive effect in deterring those who may wish to make this country a place where they may hatch and concoct crimes of a disgraceful character; and, at all events, they will learn that they cannot do so without liability to punishment." Mr. Kinglake proposed, as an amendment, that it was inexpedient to legislate in compliance with the demand made in Count Walewski's despatch, until the correspondence between the two governments subsequent to that despatch had been produced.

A long debate ensued, in which Mr. Disraeli took part. From the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, we see how high was his estimate of the late emperor, and how important he considered the necessity of maintaining the alliance between England and France. "I would remind the House," he began (February 9, 1858), "that it is not unusual in the history of this country, and in the practice of parliament when some desperate crime has been committed, or when there has been an unusual repetition of some crime known to the law, that parliament should take those circumstances into consideration, and, upon the circumstance of the moment, proceed to legislate. Why, throughout the debate of this night there have been frequent allusions to the difference of the law on this very subject in Ireland and in England. How came that difference to be established? It was owing to the peculiar circumstances of Ireland. It was the prevalence of conspiracies to murder in Ireland that led the attention of parliament to the subject; and without offering at this moment any opinion upon the expediency of the course which was adopted, still it is a fact, that special circumstances of that country induced parliament to legislate upon that subject. Well, sir, there have been other cases which, I am sure, will be fresh in the memory of all who are present, in which legislation has been induced by special circumstances of this

character. There is a case of great notoriety, which is part of the history of this country, and which intimately interests honourable members of this House, for honourable members of this House were concerned in it. There is a case where a foreigner stabbed, and attempted to assassinate, a minister of state at the council table. I allude to the case of Guiscard and Mr. Harley. Guiscard, a French agent, stabbed Mr. Harley, who at the time, as chancellor of the exchequer, was sitting at the Cockpit, at a meeting of the privy council. That was an attempt at assassination, which, though it failed, excited the greatest excitement in the country. Guiscard was a Frenchman. He was denounced as a Popish spy. The attempt was taken as evidence of a Popish plot, and great agitation prevailed in the public mind. What was the conduct of parliament under the circumstances? Were they silent? Did they take no steps to express their opinion or endeavour to prevent the repetition of such attempts by legislation? On the contrary, the House of Commons met and addressed the throne. The ministers introduced, and the House passed unanimously, a bill which rendered the crime of attempting to assassinate a privy councillor a felony."

With that precedent before them, continued Mr. Disraeli, should they regard the person of one of their most powerful and faithful allies as a matter of less interest than when the person of an English minister was in question? All the circumstances connected with the attack upon the Emperor of the French must arouse the sympathy and command the good feeling of the country and of parliament. During the last five years they had found in the ruler of France a tried ally—one who had proved in the most trying fortunes that England could depend upon his constancy. The attempt to assassinate the emperor had been organized and matured in this country, and it behoved parliament fully to sympathize with the position of that monarch, and remove all obstacles which embarrassed his

rule. He frankly admitted that the despatch of Count Walewski was not written with that tact, good temper, and good sense which generally characterized the French minister's lucubrations, and that the observations of the French colonels were impertinent. But apologies had been tendered for the publicity afforded to such observations, and they should be accepted with a good grace. Besides, did the House not remember when cabinet ministers had denounced the Emperor of the French as a tyrant, a usurper, a perjurer, and had asked the people of England what protection they could have for their wives and daughters with such neighbours as the French, and such a ruler as the French emperor? Were the statesmen of England less offensive to France upon that occasion than the French colonels had now been to England? If the French emperor and the French nation could endure with impunity such insults from English cabinet ministers, he really thought the people of England could afford to pocket the impertinence of the French colonels.

It was his intention, proceeded Mr. Disraeli, to support the bill, because he wished to maintain the alliance between England and France, which he believed to be the key and corner-stone of modern civilization; still, he far from approved of the manner in which the government had acted. He thought they had alarmed England without pleasing France; but he would not vote against the bill, because he was desirous of showing the ruler of France, at such a moment, that parliament genuinely and generously sympathized with the difficulties of the imperial position. He would reserve to himself, on the second reading of the bill, the power of considering the principle upon which it was founded. "I make a full and fair admission," he concluded, "that a proposition less satisfactory never appears to me to have been offered to the consideration of this house of parliament. When the French nation, through their ministers and rulers, had placed before us

a statement of their fancied grievances, an English minister should, in some immortal state paper breathing the fire and logical eloquence of a Canning, have answered that despatch. He should have placed upon the table a manifesto of our rights and privileges, and at the same time, have combined with it a glowing expression of sympathy with a powerful and faithful ally. This is what I expected; and the minister who missed that opportunity, missed, as I think, a great occasion. If we had had the despatch of Count Walewski placed on the table, and at the same time the answer of the British minister worthy of the opportunity, in my opinion Her Majesty's government would have been placed in a position of no difficulty, and the feelings between the two nations would have been maintained in that amicable condition which we all so much desire. Such a despatch would have been the key-note of the country. The minister might have come down under those circumstances and have given to the French emperor what he wanted, what he naturally, reasonably, and properly desired.

. . . What the emperor really required, I apprehend, was a plain demonstration on the part of this country, which would have dissipated those apprehensions which have unfortunately proved so considerable in France; but I cannot believe that the bill which the noble lord has proposed will at all tend to that most desirable consummation. So far as I am concerned, I consider it the most unfortunate part of the position in which we are placed that this opportunity has been so mismanaged by Her Majesty's ministers as to have alarmed England without pleasing France. Still, I cannot but think that we ought not to take a course which might lead to prolonged and mischievous misconceptions, because we disapprove of the clumsy and feeble manner in which the government has attempted to deal with this difficulty. We must not seize this opportunity because we wish to inflict a check upon the government, nor do that which might be miscon-

strued into an insult to that prince who, I think, deserves well of this country; and therefore it is my intention to vote for the bringing in of this bill, though I am not prepared, as at present advised, to take any further part in its defence."

Thanks to this negative sort of support from the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Kinglake withdrew his amendment, and permission was accorded to Lord Palmerston to bring in his bill.

During the interval, however, between the first and second reading of this measure, the feeling of the country against French interference had deepened into a sullen and mutinous spirit. It was said that the bill was a servile compliance with French demands, and should not be passed under the present circumstances. The prime minister was accused of being the *préfet* of the emperor, and of meanly yielding the independent authority he ought to exercise as an English minister. Then also, it was sternly asked, why had no answer been returned to the despatch of Count Walewski? The mood of the nation was clearly interpreted by the House of Commons when the second reading of the Conspiracy Bill came on. No sooner had Lord Palmerston sat down, after briefly alluding to his measure, than Mr. Milner Gibson, amid loud and repeated cheers, moved as an amendment, "That this House cannot but regret that Her Majesty's government, previously to inviting the House to amend the law of conspiracy at the present time, have not felt it to be their duty to reply to the important despatch received from the French government, dated Paris, January 20, 1858, which has been laid before parliament." The opportunity was not lost upon the generalship of Mr. Disraeli. It was one of those occasions when genius sees the course that is precisely to be pursued, adroitly presses its advantage home, and taking the tide at the flood, is borne on to victory. The leader of the Opposition saw that there was no inconsistency in voting for the introduction of the bill,

and afterwards supporting the amendment, for the political situation had changed. It was not a question now between England and France, but between the House of Commons and the prime minister. In his first speech he had stated how advisable it would have been to have had the answer to the despatch laid before the House; and yet nearly a fortnight had elapsed, and still no reply had been forwarded to Paris.

"Ten days ago," Mr. Disraeli said (February 19, 1858), "many hon. gentlemen acceded to the proposal of the government in the most guarded manner, because they reserved to themselves the right on a future occasion of expressing their opinions on the conduct of the government, and the injurious influence which it has exercised upon the character of England and the general course of events; but because they did then accede to the introduction of the bill, does that stop them from opposing its further progress through this House? Why, if it was ten days ago a question between the parliament of England and the government and the people of France, that is not the position in which it stands upon the present occasion; and in coming to a vote to-night we have the great advantage that on the previous occasion, by the manner in which the Commons of England agreed to the introduction of the bill, we proved, our sincere sympathy with the French nation, and we displayed a decorous respect for the Emperor of the French. That very circumstance, I think, allows us now to offer our opinions, because now they cannot be misinterpreted, upon the conduct of the British minister."

It was now, he argued, a question between parliament and the prime minister. If it was the fault of the government that ten days ago the despatch of Count Walewski was not answered, what excuse could now be made that it had not been replied to? Parliament had generously supported the first reading of the bill, with a clear intimation of the view with which it regarded the *laches* of the government in not replying

to that missive of the minister of France, and yet even now no answer had been sent! No valid reason, no satisfactory excuse, had been advanced for the conduct of the government. The despatch of Count Walewski had been published in the *Moniteur*, it had appeared in every accredited organ in Europe, it was the talk of all diplomacy, and still no reply had been vouchsafed to so important a document. It was perfectly inexplicable to him, said Mr. Disraeli, how the government could be guilty of the indiscretion of laying that unanswered despatch upon the table of the House of Commons, and of making it the very basis of the legislation which they now proposed. The question they had to decide to-night was solely confined to the responsibility which the government had incurred to those who represented the people of England in that House. The whole circumstance of that despatch was cloaked in mystery, and no explanation had been afforded why it had not been answered. The government had behaved in a perplexed, a timid, a confused and unsatisfactory manner. If ministers had acted with promptitude and firmness—with a spirit ready to assert the dignity of the country, but at the same time calculated to conciliate the feelings of a faithful ally—no misconception would have occurred. The issue before them had been narrowed to a very small limit. It was a question between parliament and the servants of the crown. Had ministers, or had they not, done their duty?

On a division, the House of Commons decided that the servants of the crown had not done their duty, and Lord Palmerston found himself in a minority—Ayes, 215; Noes, 234. The majority was a mixed one; it was composed of 146 Conservatives, eighty-four Liberals, and four Peelites—Gladstone, Graham, Cardwell, and Sidney Herbert.

The defeat of the government took the country by surprise. There had been nothing in the events which had preceded

the introduction of this bill to plainly indicate that Lord Palmerston had been losing ground. In the recent elections he was the hero of the hour, the patriotic minister of England, and his policy had been stamped with the warm approval of the nation. On the conclusion of the mutiny the war with China had been resumed, and Canton had been taken. The vote of thanks to the civil and military officers of India, in spite of the efforts of the Opposition to exclude the name of Lord Canning, had been passed. The Oaths Bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, to effect the admission of the Jews into parliament, and which empowered either house of parliament, by resolution, to omit the words, "upon the true faith of a Christian," from the oath of abjuration, had encountered no hostility. The measure to abolish the double government in India had met with approval. Reform, anxiously wanted, was on the eve of being introduced. Everything seemed to lead to the supposition that the Palmerston cabinet was about to hold a long lease of power. The government fell because the prime minister had wounded the country where it was the most likely to feel wounded, and because he declined to appeal for a further continuance in office. Had Lord Palmerston appealed to the House of Commons for a vote of confidence, the Opposition would in all probability have been defeated, and another measure more satisfactory to the country than the Conspiracy to Murder Bill been introduced. The chief of the cabinet, however, preferred to follow the constitutional course, and tendered his resignation. Lord Derby was sent for by Her Majesty, and the following were the most important members of the new Conservative administration:—

First Lord of the Treasury, .	Earl of Derby.
Lord Chancellor,	Lord Chelmsford.
Lord President of the Council,	Marquis of Salisbury.
Lord Privy Seal,	Earl of Hardwicke.
Chancellor of the Exchequer,	Mr. Disraeli.
Home Secretary,	Mr. Walpole.







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RIGHT HON. JAMES HOWARD HARRIS,
EARL OF MALMESBURY, G.C.B.



RIGHT HON. SIR JOHN PAKINGTON,
BARN HAMPTON, E.G.B.

Foreign Secretary, . . .	Earl of Malmesbury.
Colonial Secretary, . . .	Lord Stanley.
War Secretary,	Colonel Peel.
Indian Board of Control, .	Lord Ellenborough.
President of Board of Trade,	Mr. Henley.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,	Duke of Montrose.
Postmaster-General, . . .	
First Lord of the Admiralty,	Sir J. Pakington.
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland,	The Earl of Eglinton.
Chief Secretary for Ireland,	Lord Naas.
Woods and Forests, . . .	Lord J. Manners.

During the remainder of the session, several measures of great importance not only became law, but the monotony of legislation was frequently enlivened by contests between those who had been expelled from, and those who had recently acceded to office. One of the first duties of the new cabinet was to repair the omission of its predecessor, and return an answer to the despatch of Count Walewski. "Your lordship will remark to Count Walewski," wrote Lord Malmesbury to Lord Cowley, our ambassador at Paris, "that his Excellency, in stating that the attempt which has just providentially failed, like others which have preceded, was devised in England; in speaking with reference to the *adeptes de la démagogie* established in England, of 'assassination elevated to doctrine, preached openly, practised in repeated attempts;' and in asking 'whether the right of asylum should protect such a state of things or contribute to favour their designs and their plans,' has not unnaturally been understood to imply imputations, not only that the offences enumerated are not recognized as such by the English law, and may be committed with impunity, but that the spirit of English legislation is such as designedly to shelter and screen the offender from punishment. Her Majesty's government are persuaded that had Count Walewski known, when his Excellency held with your lordship the conversation to which I have adverted above, that such construction was put upon certain portions of his despatch of January 20, he would have had no difficulty in adding to the assurance then

given—the assurance that nothing could have been further from his intention than to convey an imputation injurious alike to the morality and the honour of the British nation." A few days after the transmission of this despatch, a reply was received which enabled Mr. Disraeli to announce to the House of Commons (March 12, 1858), that the unfortunate misunderstanding which had recently existed between the two countries had now entirely terminated in a manner alike friendly and honourable, and which would be as satisfactory to the feelings as it was conducive to the interests of the two countries.

The overthrow of the late cabinet rendered it necessary for the Conservative government to deal with the India bill which Lord Palmerston had introduced, but owing to party defeat, had been prevented from carrying through. On the conclusion of the severe struggles of the mutiny, it became very evident that the end of "John Company" was approaching. The evils consequent upon the double government then in fashion were so glaring, that it was impossible, in the face of the past difficulties that had occurred, to defend the system. The crown had the power of nominating the governor-general, and the company had the power of recalling him. The company gave general directions for the government of India; but the parliamentary department, known as the board of control, had the right to review and revise those directions. Thus on every grave occasion there was a division of power and a conflict of authority. In introducing his bill for the transfer of the authority of the company to the crown, Lord Palmerston had said that he was not acting in a spirit of hostility to the East India Company, nor upon the ground of any delinquency on the part of the company; but that it was solely owing to the inconvenience, and the injurious character of the existing arrangements, he desired to substitute the direct government of the crown. He showed that there was a

conflict of responsibility; he pictured momentous despatches oscillating in cabs between Cannon Row and Leadenhall Street, and pointed out that the results were generally a compromise unsatisfactory both to the India house and the board of control. It now fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House of Commons, to carry out this policy. He rose up (March 26, 1858) to introduce the India Bill of the new government—called India Bill No. 2, so as to distinguish it from the bill previously brought in by Lord Palmerston. Like its predecessor, it never went beyond the first reading.

"I could willingly have wished," he said, "that it had not fallen to my lot to perform a duty to-night which I believe to be clearly for the public advantage; but which, I think, no man not totally devoid of sensibility can perform without emotion. This corporation has fallen, sir, from no inefficiency on the part of its chief managers. It has certainly not fallen from any want of talent, spirit, and devotion in its admirable public servants. It has fallen before the inevitable consequences of time, of change, and of progress. The circumstances under which it was created and cherished have gradually changed and passed away; and though its fall at last has appeared to be sudden, those who have given attention to its position could hardly have doubted, from the year 1853, that the time had almost arrived, and must arrive without any great delay, when parliament would have to consider what should be the most fitting substitute for an institution which in its day has done great service to this country, and which will always be remembered with pride and with respect. The East India Company has fallen very much like that great Italian republic which I have always thought it rivalled and resembled. It has fallen in possession of a gallant army, a powerful fleet, and a considerable territory. It has fallen with all the semblance of authority, and it has met its end in the august fulfilment of its duties.

But when Venice fell under similar circumstances, it was discovered that, whatever was its outward show, it rested on a foundation which had been sapped and was hollow for a long period of time. Like Venice, however, the East India Company has left a legacy of glory to mankind; and in treating to-night of a form of government which in our opinion ought to be substituted for that which has become extinct, I hope the House will allow me to express my own feelings, and to speak of the company with that respect which I think every right-minded Englishman will always extend to its memory."

Into the details of this measure we need but briefly enter, since the bill did not become law, but was withdrawn in favour of India Bill, No. 3, based upon the resolutions brought forward by Lord John Russell. Whilst desirous of abolishing the court of directors, and transferring their powers to the crown, Mr. Disraeli sought to secure the support of the democratic section of the community by making certain members of the council elective, and vesting the choice of them in large parliamentary constituencies. His scheme was as follows:—At the head of affairs there was to be a secretary of state for India, who was to be president of the council of India, and to have the power of appointing a vice-president. The council for India was to consist of eighteen persons, half to be nominated by the crown, half to be elected. Each of the Presidencies was to furnish one member of the council—a civil servant, who had served for at least ten years, five of which were to have been passed as resident or political agent at the court of some native prince. The remaining members were to represent the military service of the queen in India and the armies of the three Presidencies. The first council was to be appointed by parliament, but the second and future members by royal warrant. The other portion of the proposed council was to be elective, the qualification for four of the members being service for

at least ten years in the army, navy, or civil service of India, or residence there for fifteen years, engaged in agriculture, in commerce, or as a planter or manufacturer. The constituency by which they were to be chosen would consist of about 5000 persons, a vote being given to every one who had borne the queen's commission in India for ten years or who had been in the civil service for that time, to every registered proprietor of £2000 stock in Indian railways, and to every *bonâ fide* holder of £1000 stock. The remaining five members were to be elected by London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast, respectively.

Shortly after its introduction the bill encountered strong opposition, both in parliament and throughout the country. Mr. Roebuck called it a sham from beginning to end, and said the electoral principle was introduced only to give colour to the despotic character of the bill. Mr. Bright warned the government to reconsider the measure, and stigmatized the provisions relating to popular election as clap-trap. The more the measure was examined, the more was it disliked; especial disapprobation being directed against the propositions to make certain members of the council elective, and to vest the choice of them in large parliamentary constituencies. When the bill came on for the second reading, had the Opposition been united it would have gone hard with the government; but instead of attacking the bill, and pressing the matter to a division, Lord John Russell rose and proposed to proceed by resolution. In substance, the resolutions he proposed provided for the transfer of the governing powers in India, executed by the company, to the crown, acting through one of the principal secretaries of state; those functions of government to be exercised by a minister of the crown, either alone or with the approbation of the committee for the affairs of India; a council of not less than twelve nor more than fifteen members was to

be appointed; and in order to secure knowledge and experience in the council, each member was to be required to have served for a term of years to be fixed by statute; the council was to be partly nominated and partly elected.

Upon these resolutions the India Bill, No. 3, was framed. It led to much discussion in the House of Commons; but both parties appeared to be united as to the substantial merits of the measure, and it was sent up to the Lords in the first week of July. It passed rapidly through the Upper House, and was then sent down to the Commons with a few trifling alterations. The most important of these was the amendment of the peers advising that the scientific branches of the Indian army should be thrown open to public competition. This amendment was supported by Mr. Disraeli (July 30, 1858). He was, he said, a firm, though not an extravagant or headstrong supporter of the competitive principle for public appointments; but as yet it had worked well, and he therefore supported the amendment. "There has rarely," he said, "been a subject of legislation more important than the one with which we have dealt in this session respecting the home government in India. Let the House recollect that for upwards of seventy years this question has been at intervals the subject of parliamentary discussion; that it has given rise to the greatest acerbities of feeling, and prolonged acrimony of political sentiments; that it has convulsed cabinets, has dissolved parliaments, and that finally it has been recognized by the country as one of those knots that no ingenuity and no impartiality could ever untie. I claim no merit for the government in having brought this matter to some satisfactory conclusion. I claim some merit for parliament and some for the House of Commons; but I claim the chief merit for the more enlightened spirit of the times in which we live, for the diffused education of the country where we have the happiness to be fellow-citizens, and the

rising sense of the value which we all attribute to intellectual acquirements, and our recognition of them as a proper qualification for admission to civil office. This spirit has assisted us in bringing this bill to its present state. It is, I think, only surprising that there have not been greater differences of opinion between the two Houses, and among ourselves in this House; but what I would impress on the House is this—the great desirability there is that this legislation should be brought to a conclusion without leaving on any side and in any quarter, in any state or condition of the country, any feeling of irritation or jealousy. It is impossible that the middle classes, whose claims have been urged so freely, fairly, and constantly in this House and in other places—it is impossible that the great body of the community can for a moment feel that their claims have not been regarded. We have effected this change if the House to-night consents to this final step; and so far as the patronage of the great empire of India—won, I freely admit, by the energies of the middle classes—is concerned, the great bulk will be obtained and enjoyed by those middle classes, not only with the certainty which they enjoyed in old days, but with far more honour and by a process infinitely more beneficial. Let us, by acceding to this suggestion of the Lords, conclude our labours with this conviction that we have, after all our pains, established on the whole a home government for India adapted to the circumstances with which it will have to deal, and have at the same time effected this object without creating jealousy, suspicion, or dissatisfaction in any portion of the community over which Her Majesty reigns.” There was some little discussion in both Houses upon the amendments to the bill; but the Lords having agreed to the proposals of Lord Derby, and the Lower House having acquiesced in the retention of the amendments which the peers insisted upon, the bill received on the last day of the session the assent of the crown.

Whilst this bill was passing through committee India became the subject of an important debate, which at first appeared fraught with very dangerous consequences to the new government. On the fall of Lucknow, which had been retaken by the rebels, and had been closely besieged by Sir Colin Campbell, the governor-general issued the following proclamation to the chiefs and inhabitants of Oude (March 3, 1858):—“The army of his Excellency the commander-in-chief is in possession of Lucknow, and the city lies at the mercy of the British government, whose authority it has for nine months rebelliously defied and resisted. The resistance begun by a mutinous soldiery has found support from the inhabitants of the city and of the province of Oude at large. Many who owed their prosperity to the British government, as well as those who believed themselves aggrieved by it, have joined in this bad cause, and ranged themselves with the enemies of the state. The first care of the governor-general will be to reward those who have been steadfast in their allegiance at a time when the authority of the government was partially overborne, and who have proved this by the support and assistance which they have given to British officers.” The proclamation then specified the names of six talookdars or landowners of Oude, including two rajahs, and declared that they “are henceforward the sole hereditary proprietors of the lands which they held when Oude came under British rule, subject only to such moderate assessment as may be imposed upon them; and that those loyal men will be further rewarded in such manner and to such extent as, upon consideration of their merits and their position, the governor-general shall determine. A proportionate measure of reward and honour, according to their deserts, will be conferred upon others in whose favour like claims may be established to the satisfaction of the government.”

In addition, the governor-general fur-

ther proclaimed to the people of Oude, that, with the above-mentioned exceptions, the proprietary right in the soil of the province was confiscated to the British government, which would dispose of that right in such manner as might seem fitting. "To those talookdars, chiefs, and landholders, with their followers, who shall make immediate submission to the chief commissioner of Oude, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders, the right hon. the governor-general promises that their lives and honour shall be safe, provided that their hands are unstained by English blood murderously shed. But as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the conditions in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves upon the justice and mercy of the British government. . . . As participation in the murder of Englishmen and Englishwomen will exclude those who are guilty of it from all mercy, so will those who have protected English lives be specially entitled to consideration and leniency." Upon this proclamation being shown to Sir James Outram, the chief commissioner of Oude, he considered the expressions it contained so harsh and severe that he remonstrated at the impolicy of its publication. He pleaded for a modification of the provisions it contained, and begged that the sweeping clauses as to confiscation might be altered. His request was to a certain extent granted, and the following words were added to the proclamation, after the paragraph which ended with "justice and mercy of the British government":—"To those among them who shall promptly come forward and give to the chief commissioner their support in the restoration of peace and order, this indulgence will be large, and the governor-general will be ready to view liberally the claims which they may thus acquire to a restitution of their former rights."

Upon the Conservative government coming into power the opinion of Sir James

Outram was warmly supported by Lord Ellenborough, the president of the board of control. Without any consultation with his colleagues, and of his own mere motion, Lord Ellenborough, shortly after his installation in office, forwarded a despatch (April 19, 1858) to the governor-general of India, condemning in strong terms the Oude proclamation. "We cannot but express to you," he said, "our apprehension that this decree, pronouncing the disinherison of a people, will throw difficulties almost insurmountable in the way of the re-establishment of peace. We are under the impression that the war in Oude has derived much of its popular character from the rigorous manner in which, without regard to what the chief landowners had become accustomed to consider their rights, the summary settlement had in a large portion of the province been carried out by your officers. . . . Other conquerors, when they have succeeded in overcoming resistance, have excepted a few persons as still deserving of punishment, but have, with a generous policy, extended their clemency to the great body of the people. You have acted upon a different principle: you have reserved a few as deserving of special favour, and you have struck, with what they feel as the severest of punishments, the mass of the inhabitants of the country. We cannot but think that the precedents from which you have departed, will appear to have been conceived in a spirit of wisdom superior to that which appears in the precedent you have made. We desire that you will mitigate, in practice, the stringent severity of the decree of confiscation you have issued against the landowners of Oude. We desire to see British authority in India rest upon the willing obedience of a contented people. There cannot be contentment where there is general confiscation. Government cannot long be maintained by any force in a country where the whole is rendered hostile by a sense of wrong; and if it were possible so to maintain it, it would not be a consummation to be desired."

The appearance of this despatch caused considerable excitement, and led to a debate in both Houses which lasted several nights. By the Opposition it was strongly censured as an attack upon an absent man, who was engaged in duties of great responsibility, and under circumstances of no ordinary peril. It was considered that the difficulties of the situation of the governor-general would be greatly increased by the publication of the despatch at such a moment. On the other hand, the Conservatives throughout the mutiny had not been influenced by the savage passions which advocated a sweeping policy of revenge, but had consistently recommended that in dealing with the rebellion justice should be tempered with mercy. It was the Liberal party who were hotly in favour of vindictive measures, confiscation, and wholesale capital punishment. The only fault the cabinet found with the despatch of Lord Ellenborough was, that it had been issued without any consultation with ministers. In both Houses resolutions were brought forward equivalent to a vote of censure. In the House of Commons Mr. Cardwell moved "That this House, while it abstains from expressing any opinion upon the policy of any proclamation which may have been issued by the governor-general of India in relation to Oude, has seen with regret and serious apprehension that Her Majesty's government have addressed to the governor-general, through the secret committee of the court of directors, and have published a despatch condemning in strong terms the conduct of the governor-general, and are of opinion that such a course on the part of the government must tend, in the present circumstances of India, to produce most prejudicial effects by weakening the authority of the governor-general, and by encouraging to further resistance those who are still in arms against us." Strange to say, a few evenings later, this despatch in favour of mercy was opposed in the Upper House, in a similar resolution to that

moved by Mr. Cardwell, by Lord Shaftesbury, whose whole career has been spent laboriously and honourably in the sacred work of mercy.

The course that Lord Ellenborough pursued when arraigned before his peers was most loyal and frank. He defended in the most emphatic manner the step he had taken; he had heard no condemnation of the tenor of the despatch he had written; no one had ventured to defend the principle of confiscation; the only question raised had been as to the propriety of publishing the document. For that act he was entirely responsible. The Oude proclamation was directly opposed in principle to the policy of the government, and deserved, in his opinion, the fullest condemnation. The despatch which censured it would be regarded in India as a message of peace, and would tend to pacify those who now lived in dread of English retribution. In England it was a question of party, but in India it would be understood as a conflict between the principles of confiscation and those of clemency. He admitted that he was on the side of clemency. Yet for his conduct he was alone responsible, and his colleagues should not be visited with any blame in the matter. In order, therefore, not to embarrass the action of the government he had tendered his resignation, which had been accepted. Lord Derby warmly praised the conduct of Lord Ellenborough; he defended the principle of the despatch, but regretted its premature publication; it was published without his knowledge, and he did not therefore hold himself responsible for the act. After a full debate upon the subject the verdict of the peers was against the resolution proposed by the Earl of Shaftesbury.

In the Commons the discussion was more lengthened and venomous. It lasted over four nights, and was memorable for the support afforded the government by some of the most prominent members of the Radical party, notably Sir James Graham

Mr. Roebuck, and Mr. Bright. As the debate proceeded, it was evident that the motion of Mr. Cardwell was viewed by members with less and less favour. The Opposition had made a false move, and soon discovered their mistake. Member after member begged Mr. Cardwell to withdraw his motion, and it soon became plain that the phalanx against the government was breaking up. Towards the close of the debate Mr. Disraeli addressed a few words to the House. The motion, he said, was a vote of censure, and he looked without apprehension to the result, and was ready to encounter the consequences of a division. With the exception of Lord Ellenborough's despatch, intended only for the eye of Lord Canning, the government had given the governor-general their cordial support. He considered the despatch justifiable, as he had always been in favour of clemency, and he was in hope that it had been addressed to a willing agent. It was most desirable that the ministers and the governor-general should act together cordially and sincerely. "We never anticipated," said Mr. Disraeli, "the publication of the despatch which has produced all this discussion. But permit me to say, that if the relations between Her Majesty's government and the governor-general of India should be cordial, they should also be sincere; and if it is supposed for a moment that I, or those with whom I act, are prepared in any way to retract the opinions which we have expressed with regard to the policy of confiscation, which Lord Canning under evil influences unhappily adopted, but which I hope and have some reason to believe he has by this time relinquished, the House will indeed have misinterpreted what I have said, and the country will indeed be deceived as to the policy which we intend to pursue. I trust that Lord Canning will be influenced by those sentiments and that policy which distinguished his career at the commencement of these sad disturbances and disasters." He then ended by reaffirming his former statements as to the manner

in which India in the future should be governed.

The House had now arrived at the decision that the debate should proceed no further, and much to the gratification and amusement of those who sat on the side of the Treasury bench the motion of Mr. Cardwell was withdrawn. The collapse of these resolutions, which ardent Liberals had fondly expected would usher in the downfall of the Derby cabinet, and lead to the restoration of those who had lately been in power, was wittily commented upon by Mr. Disraeli, when shortly afterwards he addressed a body of his electors at Slough:—

"The motion was brought forward in the House of Commons," he said to his laughing audience, "by a gentleman of unimpeachable reputation. The 'Cabal,' which has rather a tainted character, chose its instrument with pharisaical accuracy, and I assure you that when Mr. Cardwell rose to impeach me, I was terrified at my own shortcomings as I listened to a *Nisi Prius* narrative, ending with a resolution which I think must have been drawn up by a conveyancer. In the other house of parliament, a still greater reputation condescended to appear on the human stage. Gamaliel himself, with the broad phylacteries of faction on his forehead, called God to witness, in pious terms of majestic adoration, that he was not like other men, and was never influenced by party motives. Well, gentlemen, what happened under these circumstances? Something, I am quite sure, unprecedented in the parliamentary history of England; and when I hear of faction, when I hear of the arts and manœuvres of parties, when I hear sometimes that party spirit will be the ruin of this country, let us take a calm review of what has occurred during the past fortnight, and I think we shall come to the conclusion that, in a country free and enlightened as England, there are limits to party feeling which the most dexterous managers of the passions of man-

kind cannot overpass, and that in the great bulk of parliament, as I am sure, whatever may be their opinions, in the great bulk of the people of the country, there is a genuine spirit of patriotism which will always right itself."

Mr. Disraeli then described the scene which ensued on that memorable evening when the motion of Mr. Cardwell was withdrawn. "There is nothing," he laughed, "like that last Friday evening, in the history of the House of Commons. We came down to the House expecting to divide at four o'clock in the morning: I myself expecting probably to deliver an address two hours after midnight; and I believe that even with the consciousness of a good cause that is no mean effort. Well, gentlemen, we were all assembled, our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those of our proud opponents, when suddenly there arose a wail of distress—but not from us; I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry. It was like a convulsion of nature, rather than any ordinary transaction of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria or Peru; there was a rumbling murmur, a groan, a shriek, a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the House. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground; and then a village disappeared; then a tall tower toppled down; and the whole of the Opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy. Are these the people whom you want to govern the country—people in whose camp there is anarchy, between whom there is discord on every point, and who are not even united by the common bond of wishing to seize upon the spoils of office?"

Shortly before the House rose for the Whitsuntide recess Mr. Disraeli introduced

his budget, which was very favourably received. The financial statement he delivered on that occasion does not call for any detailed notice. It was a lucid business-like proceeding, delivered in a plain straightforward manner, and destitute of all the arts of eloquence and rhetoric. The nation wanted to know what it was to pay and what it was to receive, and the balance sheet was laid before it with all the prose and conciseness of a practised and unsentimental accountant. The expenditure was calculated at £67,110,000, and the revenue at £63,120,000; thus there would be a deficit of £3,990,000, which was to be met by repealing the War Sinking Fund Act, or at least suspending it until the exchequer bonds were provided for, and postponing the payment of these until 1862–63. With regard to new taxation Mr. Disraeli proposed to equalize the duty on spirits, from which he hoped to obtain £500,000; and to introduce a stamp on bankers' cheques, which he anticipated would yield £300,000. Touching the income tax he would support the settlement of 1853. "There are," he said, maintaining the opinions he had always expressed on the subject, "two great classes of reasons why the income tax should not form a permanent feature of our finance. The first class I may call domestic; the second springs rather from considerations of an external character. The feeling of the community generally of the inequality, of the injustice, and of the odious nature of this tax, has unfortunately been sanctioned and concurred in by all those statesmen who have felt the necessity of levying it; and it has been impossible to maintain it for any considerable time, or to adopt it as a permanent feature in our financial system, without great acerbity of feeling and much violent controversy being excited as to its character and its incidence. If you wish to establish it you have an endless crowd of controversies of the most angry character upon these points:—Whether there shall be recognized a difference between property

and income in its assessment; whether, if that difference be not acknowledged, a difference shall be admitted between precarious and permanent incomes; whether there shall be a difference between incomes derived from trade and incomes derived from professions; whether the poor man shall be exempted, and what a poor man really is; what is income, and what are wages; who shall be exempted, where ought the line of exemption to be drawn, and the convenience of an exemption which shall exclude all but those who are called rich. These are some of the subjects of controversy which have always been raised in the country when an attempt has been made to establish the income tax for any lengthened period. These agitations have not of late prevailed. But why, let me ask, has that been the case? It is because in 1853, after a great deal of agitation throughout the country upon this subject had taken place, after a committee had sat for two years to investigate it, and after all sorts of plans and expedients, devised by every manner of man, had been considered in reference to it, an eminent member of this House (Mr. Gladstone) brought forward a great financial scheme in which, acknowledging the impossibility of reconstructing this tax upon principles of justice—upon principles which could satisfy the fair demands and expectations of society—he submitted to the notice of the House a proposition, the effect of which would be to secure its diminution and final extinction at the end of a certain term of years.” Mr. Disraeli then informed the House that it was the intention of the government to adhere to the arrangement of 1853, and in the meanwhile not to propose any increase in the income tax in order to supply the deficit in the revenue.

During the Whitsuntide recess Mr. Disraeli was entertained by the Conservative electors of Bucks at dinner at Slough. Called upon to reply to the toast of “Her Majesty’s Ministers,” he delivered a witty

and vivacious speech, which caused much amusement and excitement at the time, and led to a parliamentary debate. He described how the Conservatives had come into office by the collapse of a government supposed to be omnipotent, but falling suddenly to pieces in a manner altogether unprecedented. He showed how unsatisfactory had been the relations between England and France when Lord Clarendon quitted office, and how the interests of the country had been neglected in the dispute with Naples as to the *Cagliari* affair.* He commented upon the collapse of Mr. Cardwell’s and Lord Shaftesbury’s resolutions in the terms we have already quoted. He alluded to the difficulties incident to his position, and the manner in which they had been overcome; and then, in a spirit of severe censure, he criticised the unprincipled opposition which the government had to encounter, and the manner in which the Liberal leaders bribed a hitherto independent press by social flatteries. “There existed at this moment,” he said, “that which has not existed in England since the days of Charles II.—a cabal which has no other object but to upset the government of the queen and to obtain its own ends in a manner the most reckless, but the most determined. They have succeeded in doing that which no cabal in modern times, I am proud to say, has yet succeeded in accom-

* The Sardinian steamer *Cagliari*, trading between Genoa and Tunis, was seized (June 26, 1857) by some armed Sicilians who were on board, and steered by them to the island of Ponza, which they attacked, releasing several prisoners and capturing arms and ammunition. They then landed on the Neapolitan territory, for the purpose of inciting the inhabitants against the government. The vessel, thus left to continue her voyage, was surrendered by the captain to a Neapolitan frigate on the high seas; and her crew, with two English engineers, Watt and Park, were imprisoned at Naples on a charge of having aided in an attempted insurrection on Neapolitan territory. Although eleven of the crew deposed that the English prisoners were ignorant of the objects of the expedition, and had been compelled by force to work the engines, they were kept in close confinement for eight months, till one had lost his reason, and both sustained serious injury to health. They were liberated in consequence of the general indignation of the English people, and the strong representations made to the Neapolitan government by the English foreign secretary, the Earl of Malmesbury. Compensation having been demanded on behalf of the victims, the sum of £8000 was conceded by the authorities at Naples.

plishing; they have, in a great degree, corrupted the once pure and independent press of England. Innocent people in the country, who look to the leading articles in the newspapers for advice and direction—who look to what are called leading organs to be the guardians of their privileges and the directors of their political consciences—are not the least aware, because this sort of knowledge travels slowly, that leading organs now are place-hunters of the cabal, and that the once stern guardians of popular rights simmer in the enervating atmosphere of gilded saloons.* Yes, gentlemen, it is too true that the shepherds who were once the guardians of the flock are now in league with the wolves; and therefore it is that, though we have been only three months in office, though during that space we have vindicated your honour, maintained the peace of Europe, which was in manifest peril, rescued our countrymen from a foreign dungeon, made up a great deficiency in your finances and yet reduced taxation, and laid a deep foundation for your future empire in the East, innocent people in the country who read leading organs believe we are a government that do nothing; that we are a weak government, and not entitled to the confidence of our country."

This speech was severely criticised in the House of Commons both by Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, and constituted the text for a debate which occupied two nights; in the Upper House it was also commented upon. The late prime minister was, however, its hottest assailant. He examined the speech paragraph by paragraph, and flatly denied the truth of the different statements brought forward. He denied that, when the present government came into office, the country was upon the verge of war with France; and even if that had been the case, such a statement ought not to have been made "in a booth at Slough to a parcel of

carousing electors." He denied that the release of the two English engineers had been due to the exertions of the Conservative government. It was not true that the late ministry had carried on an intrigue to bring about a war between Naples and Sardinia. He denied that the Indian policy of the late government had been one of vengeance and general massacre; and he exercised all his satire with regard to the charge that the Opposition was a cabal. "With reference to the assertion that we are a cabal," said Lord Palmerston, "if the use of that term implies that we are few in number, I have only to say that the result will show which of the two sides has the greatest number in the House. But I deny entirely, if we are a cabal in the sense of a party aiming at upsetting the government, that that is a novel proceeding. To say that there has never been a cabal since the days of Charles II. having for its object to upset the government, is an assertion I did not expect to hear from a quarter so enlightened. Such a thing is no novelty; but I will tell the right hon. gentleman what is such a novelty. It is not that there should be a cabal in opposition, but that there should be a factious government carrying into office all the factious feelings by which they were actuated in opposition; a government which publishes libels on the former advisers of the crown, and on acts of the crown carried out by those former ministers; a factious government that sends forth and publishes, not only to Europe, but to India, principles which, if carried into execution, would lead to the dismemberment of our Indian empire; and a government which, whatever motives it may have been actuated by, publishes to the world a most affronting insult to the highest officer of the crown in any of Her Majesty's dominions."

To these criticisms Mr. Disraeli briefly replied. "What has taken place on this subject," he said, "reminds me of a very unfortunate circumstance that has happened in that country which has been so much

* An allusion, not, it must be admitted, in the best taste to Mr. Delane, the editor of the *Times*, who was then a frequent guest at Cambridge House, and who, through his great journal, attacked the Conservative policy.

the subject of the remarks of the noble lord. A gentleman of letters, having done, or said, or written something that offended a very powerful army, was called to account by a member of it. He met his opponent without any hesitation, and, in the first instance, conducted himself with fair repute and success. But no sooner was this first affair over than another gentleman was sent for—one whose fierce mien and formidable reputation were such, that his friends thought he would put the matter right. He, too, demands satisfaction; and he is accompanied by a considerable body of other gentlemen, who seem by their appearance to signify that if the second assailant is not more successful than the first, they will find others to succeed him. In short, having somehow or other got into a scrape, they mean to bully him by numbers. . . . The noble lord is quite horrified that I should have spoken in a booth on matters of state policy. Special announcements on matters of state—on matters of peace or war—should be at a carousal in a club-room, such as we may remember; when you invite Her Majesty's officers who are to undertake operations of warfare, and when prime ministers take the chair, and, in what is styled (though not by me) an inebriated assembly, announce for the first time to the country that a great military expedition is to be undertaken.*

Mr. Disraeli then denied that he had ever said that the country was on the verge of war when the Conservatives came into office; but he had said that war might have taken place at the end, not of weeks or days, but of hours. He freely accepted the statement of Lord Palmerston, that on the retirement of the late government there was no prospect of a war with France. "Of course," sneered Mr. Disraeli, "when there was a government which had avoided answering a despatch which it was sup-

posed conveyed an insult to the people of this country; when there was a government which not only declined answering that supposed insulting despatch, but which also strove to introduce a bill into the House to change the laws of England—it was very easy for such a government to maintain a good understanding with the power whose purposes (that power being at the time entirely misguided) it was then prepared to fulfil. But the moment a change of government took place—the moment there was an administration whose duty it was, in deference to the resolution of the House, to answer in a becoming manner the supposed insulting despatch, and to declare to France that they were not prepared at its instance to recommend any change in the laws of England—the House will at once see that the issues of peace or war became imminent." Yet the firmness of the Conservative government had resulted in the relations between the two countries becoming daily more cordial and satisfactory.

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to re-affirm all his former statements. The English engineers had been freed by the vigour of the present government, which had specially sent an agent to Naples for that purpose; the Indian policy of the late cabinet, based on Lord Canning's proclamation, was one of vengeance, confiscation, and massacre; whilst that of the Conservatives was the superior policy of amnesty, religious toleration, and respect for property. Still Mr. Disraeli said he failed to see why Lord Palmerston should be so sensitive as to charges against the policy of the Liberals, for there was no connection between the great Liberal party and the late government. The great Liberal party was in favour of vote by ballot, the abolition of church rates, the extension of the county franchise—all measures which had certainly not been advocated by the late cabinet. Again, the great Liberal party was in favour of economy, yet no government

* In allusion to the dinner given at the Reform Club (March 7, 1854) to Admiral Sir Charles Napier previous to his departure with the Baltic fleet. Lord Palmerston took the chair, and the proceedings were characterized throughout, to put it kindly, with much festivity.

could be more guilty of extravagant, reckless, and profuse expenditure than the one lately presided over by the noble lord. There was not the slightest connection between Lord Palmerston and the great Liberal party. Upon every subject there was total want of sympathy and total dissimilarity of views. That old delusion could never again be revived. Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the charge that the Opposition had been stigmatized as a "cabal":—

"The noble lord," said Mr. Disraeli, "complains that they have been called a 'cabal.' What I call a cabal is a body of men, whether it be in this House or in another house—either a private house, or a house devoted to affairs of state—banded together not to carry out a policy, not to recommend by their wisdom and their eloquence measures calculated to win the approving sympathy of the community, but uniting all their resources, their abilities, and their varied influence—for what?—to upset the queen's government, without even in so doing declaring any policy of their own, or giving any further clue to their opinions than this—that the first article of their creed is place. It is this conduct which has made the great body of the people of this country look with aversion on those machinations and manœuvres, and has gained for Her Majesty's government the sympathy of all honourable and generous minds. If I wanted to confirm the government in power; if I were anxious to assure a longer tenure of office, I should beg the noble lords to continue their practices. I should be delighted, night after night, if they called on me in this manner to defend statements made to my constituents, not one word of which I retract, and which I made with that due thought which such statements required. I should wish the noble lord to continue this course, for I am quite certain that, whatever difference of opinion there may be in this House or in England between the great Conservative party and the great Liberal

party, there is this one point of union between us—that we are equally resolved, both in this House and throughout the country, no longer to be made the tools or the victims of an obsolete oligarchy."

Parliament was prorogued August 3, 1858, to the following October. The legislative results had not been unfruitful, and compared favourably with the meagre list carried through by the late government. India had been transferred to the crown. The Oaths Bill, so long contended for by Lord John Russell, had become law, and Jews were now to be admitted into parliament.* A measure had been introduced for the purification of the Thames, which exhaled its unsavoury odours too closely to St. Stephen's. A conference was sitting at Paris to solve several knotty diplomatic questions, and to insure the preservation of general peace. The colony of British Columbia had been established. Altogether the words in the royal speech were justified; the session had been "productive of many important measures."

During the recess several events occurred deserving of passing notice. The treaty of Tien Tsin was ratified, and peace with China established; a treaty of amity and commerce was concluded with Japan; the East India Company was dissolved, and the authority of the queen proclaimed throughout India; and Mr. Gladstone was busy, as lord high commissioner extraordinary, inquiring into the relations between the Ionian Islands and England.

* The following dates record the history of Jewish persecution and emancipation in this country:—1189, Murder of numerous Jews at the coronation of Richard II. 1269, Jews prohibited from holding freehold property in England. 1290, Jews by order of Edward I. expelled from England; order rescinded by Oliver Cromwell. 1753, A bill passed for the naturalization of Jews in England, but repealed the following year. 1833, Robert Grant's bill for relieving the Jews from civil disabilities rejected by the Lords. 1835, The first Jewish sheriff of London elected. 1837, The first Jew knighted. 1846, Jews placed upon the same footing as Protestant dissenters with respect to their places of worship, schools, &c. 1848, 1851, 1853, and 1857, Lord John Russell's bill rejected by the Lords. 1855, Election of the first Jew as lord mayor. 1858, House of Commons empowered to modify the oaths in such a manner that they might be taken by Jews. 1860, The words "upon the faith of a Christian" expunged permanently in the case of Jewish members.

At the opening of the new year misunderstandings arose between France and Austria, which it was feared would lead to war. Lord Malmesbury appeared on the scene as peacemaker. He urged upon the two powers the wisdom of laying aside mutual suspicion, and endeavouring to promote the regeneration of Italy by a pacific policy. Since Austria was an Italian power he recommended her to begin proceedings, and to ask France to join her in reforming the abuses in the Papal states. "Austria," he wrote, "is an Italian state, and both France and Austria are now occupying the papal territories with their troops. Such a position cannot be lasting; and Her Majesty's government submit to both Austria and France that it is their public duty to terminate if possible a state of things which has become intolerable."

At the opening of parliament (February 3, 1859) Mr. Disraeli, in his reply to the criticism of Lord Palmerston, alluded to the state of foreign affairs. He admitted how unsatisfactory was the condition of Central Italy, and the course that had been pursued with foreign governments to remove the causes of discontent. "While we have done this," he said, "while we have endeavoured, both with regard to France and Austria, to remove the mistrust which has unfortunately arisen between those two great powers—while we have sought to allay the suspicions that have been unhappily excited—while we have placed before them every consideration that could be urged for maintaining that general peace which has been so long preserved, and which has been on the whole so beneficial to the cause of humanity and civilization—while we have done this, we have equally impressed on those two great powers the duty that devolves upon them of entering, not into hostile rivalry for the military command of Italy, but into that more generous emulation of seeking to advance its interests and improve its condition." He then stated that since England was a Protestant power she could not well interfere in the govern-

ment of the Pope; but she had agreed with France and Austria, that if it were necessary to alter the settlement of 1815, with regard to the position of Central Italy, England would assist those powers to her utmost to effect such a result.

Domestic affairs were, however, at this moment of far greater interest than continental politics. The question of parliamentary reform was uppermost in the minds of members, and it had been known during the winter months that Mr. Disraeli was diligent in drawing up a scheme, and that one of the first measures introduced by the Conservative cabinet would be a bill dealing with the representation of the people. Mr. Bright had been stumping the country, giving full vent to the democratic views he entertained upon the subject, and doing his best to create the agitation which had been aroused in 1832. But there was little excitement about the matter outside the walls of St. Stephen's. The country was not exactly apathetic, but it was certainly far from being under the influences of the furor which had once shrieked for "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." If a reform bill was passed it would be accepted; if not, the country had no objection to wait a little longer. The subject was more a parliamentary manoeuvre than a national question.

Mr. Disraeli, as we have seen from the speeches given in this work, had never regarded the bill of 1832 as a final measure. "Finality," he said in his sententious way, "is not the language of politics." He had accepted the bill, and had supported its clauses until the Liberals themselves had disapproved of the measure; then he had turned his thoughts to reform—to a thorough rearrangement of the bill, but to no patching up or tinkering with it. He had throughout consistently opposed any piecemeal reform, as his replies to the schemes of Mr. Locke-King plainly prove. Mr. Disraeli clearly explained his views upon the subject in his brief speech on the policy of the government of

Lord Derby, delivered early in the last session (March 15, 1858). Two years after the passing of the Reform Act, when it was said that if the Tories came into power they would alter the bill, Sir Robert Peel rose up in the House of Commons and addressed himself to that question. "He made a compact, as it were," said Mr. Disraeli, "with the country and with parliament. He engaged, with the party of which he was the leader, and with the colleagues with whom he was acting in public life, that he would accept the Reform Act, and he did accept it, heartily and sincerely, as the settlement of a great question, and that, if he found himself in power, he would neither directly nor indirectly attempt to change or tamper with its provisions. And on that compact the Conservative party, as it was called, sincerely and honourably acted; and whenever measures were brought forward to change that Act—not from our side, but from the Liberal party—the Whig ministry were invariably supported by the Conservative party in maintaining intact the spirit and provisions of the Reform Act. At last, and late in the day, 'finality' was deserted; and we were told—and told by the leader of the Whig party—that there must be a new settlement of the question and a new reform bill; and from that moment I held myself free—and I am sure I am expressing the opinions of those with whom I act and of the great body of the Conservative party, not merely in this House, but throughout the country—from that moment we held ourselves free to consider the question of parliamentary reform upon its merits, and that if any future plan were brought forward to change the parliamentary constitution of this country we were open to offer those suggestions which, to our minds, might appear to lead to a settlement most conducive to the public weal."

The result of this freedom of action was now to be apparent. A reform bill had been drawn up by a Conservative cabinet, and it was about to be laid before the

country. Three weeks after the assembling of parliament, Mr. Disraeli rose to move—"That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the laws relating to the representation of the people in England and Wales, and to facilitate the registration and voting of electors." "Sir," he began, "it is my duty to-night to draw the attention of the House to a theme, than which nothing more important can be submitted to their consideration. Those which are often esteemed the greatest political questions—those questions, for example, of peace or war which now occupy and agitate the public mind—are in fact inferior. In either of those cases an erroneous policy may be retraced; and there are no disasters which cannot be successfully encountered by the energies of a free people; but the principles upon which the distribution of power depends in a community when once adopted can rarely be changed, and an error in that direction may permanently affect the fortunes of a state or the character of a people. But, grave as is the duty and difficult as is the task, which have devolved upon Her Majesty's government in undertaking to prepare a measure to amend the representation of the Commons in this House, these I admit, and cheerfully admit, are considerably mitigated by two circumstances—the absence of all passion on the subject, and the advantage of experience. Whatever may be the causes, on which I care not to dwell, I believe that on this subject and on this occasion I appeal to as impartial a tribunal as is compatible with our popular form of government. I believe there is a general wish among all men of light and leading in this country that the solution of this long-controverted question should be arrived at; and that if public men, occupying the position which we now occupy, feel it their duty to come forward to offer that solution—one which I trust in our case will not be based upon any mean concession or any temporary compromise, but on principles consistent with the spirit of our

constitution, which will bear the scrutiny of debate, and which I trust may obtain the sympathy of public opinion—I feel persuaded that in the present conjuncture of our political world such an attempt will meet from this House with a candid though a discriminating support. And equally it may be observed, that the public mind of this country has for the last quarter of a century, and especially during its latter portion, been so habituated to the consideration of all questions connected with popular representation, the period itself has been so prolific of political phenomena for the contemplation and study, and I may add the instruction, of the people of this country, that we are in a much more favourable position than the statesmen who in 1832 undertook the great office which then devolved upon them, because we address not only a parliament, but a country which has upon this subject the advantage of previous knowledge; and all will agree that this greatly facilitates both discussion and decision. Although some of those who took a leading part in the transactions of 1832, happily for us, still sit in both Houses of Parliament, yet so long is the space of time that has elapsed since those occurrences, I think it is not impossible to speak of them with something of the candour of history. I do not doubt that our future records will acknowledge that, during some of the most important political events of modern history, those events were treated with the energy and the resource becoming British statesmen. If we judge of the Act of 1832 by its consequences, in the measures of this House and in the character of its members, it must be admitted that that policy was equal to the emergency it controlled and directed. I cannot, indeed, agree with those who attribute to the legislation of 1832 every measure of public benefit that has been passed by this House during the last twenty-five years. I know well that before the reform of this House took place the administration of this country was dis-

tinguished by its ability and precision. I believe, indeed, that, especially in the latter part of the administration of Lord Liverpool, this House was rather in advance of the opinion of the country at large. But I think that the reform of the House of Commons in 1832 greatly added to the energy and public spirit in which we had then become somewhat deficient.

“But, sir, it must be remembered that the labours of the statesmen who took part in the transactions of 1832 were eminently experimental. In many respects they had to treat their subject empirically, and it is not to be wondered at if in the course of time it was found that some errors were committed in that settlement; and if, as time rolled on, some, if not many deficiencies, were discovered. I beg the House to consider well those effects of time, and what has been the character of the twenty-five years that have elapsed since the reform of 1832. They form no ordinary period. In a progressive country and a progressive age, progress has been not only rapid, but perhaps precipitate. There is no instance in the history of Europe of such an increase of population as has taken place in this country during this period. There is no example in the history of Europe or of America, of a creation and accumulation of capital so vast as has occurred in this country in those twenty-five years. And I believe the general diffusion of intelligence has kept pace with that increase of population and wealth. In that period you have brought science to bear on social life in a manner no philosopher in his dreams could ever have anticipated; in that space of time you have, in a manner, annihilated both time and space. The influence of the discovery of printing is really only beginning to work on the multitude. It is, therefore, not surprising that in a measure passed twenty-five years ago, in a spirit necessarily experimental, however distinguished were its authors, and however remarkable their ability, some omissions have been found that ought to

be supplied, and some defects that ought to be remedied. In such a state of things a question in England becomes what is called a public question. Thus parliamentary reform becomes a public question; a public question in due course of time becomes a parliamentary question; and then, as it were, shedding its last skin, it becomes a ministerial question."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the subject of parliamentary reform having unsuccessfully been introduced in 1852, in 1854, and in 1857 by three cabinets, and to the efforts of independent members to deal with the question by measures of detail, instead of taking a general view and bringing forward a comprehensive plan, which would have effected a fair adjustment of all the controverted points. "This," he continued, "was the state of the question when, a change of government again occurring, the Earl of Derby became responsible for the administration of this country. Let me now ask the House what, in their opinion, was our duty under these circumstances? That, from the peculiar position at which this question had arrived, it might have been practicable by evasion for a time to stave off a solution, I do not say is impossible; but that is a course which, speaking for my colleagues and myself, I may respectfully observe is not at all congenial with our tastes. Were you to allow this question, which the sovereign had three times announced was one that ought to be dealt with—which three prime ministers, among the most skilful and authoritative of our statesmen, had declared it was their intention to deal with—to remain in abeyance? Was it to be left as a means of reorganizing an Opposition? Is that the opinion of either side of this House? Is it the judgment of this House that that is a wholesome position for political questions of the highest quality to occupy? Was parliamentary reform—a subject which touches the interests of all classes and all individuals, and in the wise and

proper settlement of which the very destiny of this country is concerned—to be suffered to remain as a desperate resource of faction; or was it a matter to be grappled with only at a moment of great popular excitement and settled, not by the reason, but by the passion of the people? Were we to establish, as it were, a chronic irritation in the public mind upon this subject, which, of all others, should not form the staple of our party contests? Were the energies of this country—an ancient country of complicated civilization—were they at this time of day, boasting as we do of a throne that has endured for a thousand years, to be distracted and diverted from their proper objects, the increase of the wealth and welfare of the community, and wasted in a discussion of the principles of our constitution and of what should be the fundamental base of our political institutions? I cannot for a moment believe that this House would think that a posture of affairs which would be free from danger to the empire, or which it would be honourable for any public man to sanction. Having, then, to consider the state of the country with reference to this question, and recalling all those details which on this occasion I feel it incumbent on me to place before the House, the government of the Earl of Derby, on their accession to power, had to inquire what it was their duty to fulfil. And, sir, it was the opinion—the unanimous opinion of the cabinet of the Earl of Derby—that this subject must be dealt with, and dealt with in an earnest and sincere spirit."

Mr. Disraeli then contended, that there had been nothing in the position or antecedents of Lord Derby to preclude him from dealing with the question. Lord Derby, as Mr. Stanley, had served in the cabinet of Earl Grey in 1832, and to his ability and energy much of the success of the Reform Bill had been due. The Conservatives had never opposed any extension of the clauses of the Reform Bill, they had never objected to any measure which was to effect a reconstruction of the House;

but they had frankly said, that if those who had made the settlement of 1832 questioned its propriety and proposed to amend it, the Conservative party would offer no obstruction, but would give to the proposed amendments their candid consideration, making every effort on their part to improve the representation of the people. He, therefore, could not understand the justness of the taunts which had been so freely directed against the Conservative party for entering upon this task.

"Now, sir," proceeded the chancellor of the exchequer, "it appears to me that those who are called parliamentary reformers may be divided into two classes. The first are those whose object I will attempt to describe in a sentence. They are those who would adapt the settlement of 1832 to the England of 1859; and would act in the spirit and according to the genius of the existing constitution. Among these reformers I may be permitted to class Her Majesty's ministers. But, sir, it would not be candid, and it would be impolitic, not to acknowledge that there is another school of reformers, having objects very different from those which I have named. The new school, if I may so describe them, would avowedly effect a parliamentary reform on principles different from those which have hitherto been acknowledged as forming the proper foundations for this House. The new school of reformers are of opinion that the chief, if not the sole object of representation, is to realize the opinion of the numerical majority of the country. Their standard is population; and I admit that their views have been clearly and efficiently placed before the country. Now, sir, there is no doubt population is, and must always be, one of the elements of our representative system. There is also such a thing as property; and that, too, must be considered. I am ready to admit that the new school have not on any occasion limited the elements of their representative system solely to population. They have with a murmur admitted that property has an equal claim to considera-

tion; but then they have said that property and population go together. Well, sir, population and property do go together—in statistics, but in nothing else. Population and property do not go together in politics and practice. I cannot agree with the principles of the new school, either if population or property is their sole, or if both together constitute their double standard. I think the function of this House is something more than merely to represent the population and property of the country. This House, in my opinion, ought to represent all the interests of the country. Now, those interests are sometimes antagonistic often competing, always independent and jealous; yet they all demand a distinctive representation in this House, and how can that be effected, under such circumstances, by the simple representation of the voice of the majority, or even by the mere preponderance of property? If the function of this House is to represent all the interests of the country, you must of course have a representation scattered over the country; because interests are necessarily local. An illustration is always worth two arguments; permit me, therefore, so to explain my meaning—if it requires explanation. Let me take the two cases of the metropolis and that of the kingdom of Scotland, to the representation of which the hon. gentleman opposite (Mr. Baxter) is so much afraid that I should not do justice. The population of the metropolis and that of the kingdom of Scotland are, at this time, about equal. The wealth of the metropolis and the wealth of the kingdom of Scotland are very unequal. The wealth of the metropolis yields a yearly income of £44,000,000—upon which the assessment under the great schedules of the income tax is levied; while the amount upon which such assessment is levied under those schedules in Scotland is only £30,000,000. There is, therefore, the annual difference between £44,000,000 and £30,000,000; yet who would for a moment pretend that the various classes and interests of Scotland

could be adequately represented by the same number of members as represent the metropolis? So much for the population test.

"Let us now take the property test," he continued. "Let us take one portion of that very metropolis to which I have this moment referred. This is an age of statistics. I do not place more value upon them than they deserve; but this is, I believe, at least an accurate memorandum. Let us look to the wealth of the city of London. The wealth of the city of London is more than equivalent to that of twenty-five English and Welsh counties returning forty members, and of 140 boroughs returning 232 members. The city of London, the city proper, is richer than Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham put together. Or take another and even more pregnant formula. The city of London is richer than Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, Sheffield, Hull, Wolverhampton, Bradford, Brighton, Stoke-upon-Trent, Nottingham, Greenwich, Preston, East Retford, Sunderland, York, and Salford combined—towns which return among them no less than thirty-one members. Yet the city of London has not asked me to insert it in the bill which I am asking leave to introduce, for thirty-one members. . . .

So much for the population test, and so much for the property test, if you are to reconstruct this House on either of those principles; but the truth is, that men are sent to this House to represent the opinions of a place, and not its power. We know very well what takes place at a parliamentary election in this country. The man of princely fortune has, when he goes to the poll, no more votes than the humble dweller in a £10 house; because we know very well that his wealth, his station, and his character will give him the influence which will adequately represent his property; and the constitution shrinks from a plurality of votes in such a case. The constitution also shrinks from the enjoyment of a plurality of votes by large towns

by means of seats in this House. It wants the large towns and cities of England to be completely represented. It wishes to see the members for Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham in their places, ready to express the views of those powerful and influential communities; and it recognizes them as the representatives of the opinions of those places, but not as the representatives of their power and influence. Because what happens to the rich man at a contested election will happen to these places. Why, sir, the power of the city of London or that of the city of Manchester in this House is not be measured by the honourable and respectable individuals whom they send here to represent their opinions. I will be bound to say that there is a score—nay, that there are three score—members in this House who are as much and more interested, perhaps, in the city of Manchester than those who are in this House its authoritative and authentic representatives; and when a question arises in which the interests of Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham are concerned, the influence of those places is shown by the votes of persons so interested in their welfare, as well as by those of the respectable and respected individuals who are sent here to represent them.

"Look at the metropolis itself, not speaking merely of the city of London. Is the influence of the metropolis in this House to be measured by the sixteen hon. members who represent it, and who represent it, I have no doubt, in a manner perfectly satisfactory to their constituents, or they would not be here? No! We all of us live in the metropolis; many of the members of this House have property, a few of them very large property in it; and, therefore, the indirect influence of the metropolis in this House is not to be measured merely by the number of members which it returns to parliament. So much for that principle of population, or that principle of property, which has been adopted by some, or that principle of population and property com-

bined, which seems to be the more favourite form. It appears to me that the principle, as one upon which the popular representation in this House ought to be founded, is fallacious and erroneous. There is one remarkable circumstance connected with the new school, who would build up our representation on the basis of a numerical majority, and who take population as their standard. It is this—that none of their principles apply except in cases where population is concentrated. The principle of population is, although I cannot say a favourite doctrine, because I do not think it is so, a very notorious doctrine at the present moment; but it is not novel, although introduced at a comparatively recent period into our politics. It was broached in the discussions which took place when the former reform bills were brought in by preceding governments. It was the favourite argument of the late Mr. Hume. His argument for parliamentary reform—a subject which he frequently brought before the House—was generally this; he took some unfortunate borough in the west of England; he described it as a borough with a very small population and very little business, and he said:—

This borough returns two members to parliament, while the great city of Manchester, with its population of hundreds of thousands, and with half the business of the world concentrated in its circle, only returns the same number. Can anything be more monstrous? Disfranchise the small borough, and give its members to the city of Manchester.

“Such was the argument which for several years passed in this House unchallenged. Mr. Hume brought forward his motion for parliamentary reform in 1852, when, by a somewhat curious coincidence, I was occupying the same seat which I now fill, and it fell to my lot to make a reply to him. I stated then what I had long felt, that although I entirely rejected the principle of population, still, admitting it for the sake of argument to be a right principle, we must arrive at conclusions

exactly the reverse of those which Mr. Hume and the school which he founded were perpetually impressing upon the public mind. The principle in my opinion is false, and would produce results dangerous to the country, and fatal to the House of Commons. But if it be true—if it be our duty to reform the representation upon it—then I say you must arrive at conclusions entirely different from those which the new school has adopted. If population is to be the standard, and you choose to disfranchise small boroughs and small constituencies, it is not to the great towns you can, according to your own principle, transfer their members.”

Mr. Disraeli then dealt with certain returns which he had formerly quoted to the House,* proving that if they came to population in round numbers 10,500,000 of the people of England returned only 150 or 160 county members, while the boroughs representing 7,500,000 returned more than 330 members. If they admitted the principle of population they must disfranchise the boroughs, and give their members to the counties.

“Let us now see, sir,” he continued, “what will be the consequence if the population principle is adopted. You would have a House, generally speaking, formed partly of great landowners and partly of great manufacturers. I have no doubt that, whether we look to their property or to their character, there would be no country in the world which could rival in respectability such an assembly. But would it be a House of Commons—would it represent the country—would it represent the various interests of England? Why, sir, after all, the suffrage and the seat respecting which there is so much controversy and contest, are only means to an end. They are means by which you may create a representative assembly that is a mirror of the mind as well as of the material interests of England. You want in this House every element that obtains

* See pp. 142, 143 of this work.

the respect and engages the interest of the country. You must have lineage and great territorial property; you must have manufacturing enterprise of the highest character; you must have commercial weight; you must have professional ability in all its forms; but you want something more—you want a body of men not too intimately connected either with agriculture, or with manufactures, or with commerce; not too much wedded to professional thought and professional habits; you want a body of men representing the vast variety of the English character; men who would arbitrate between the claims of those great predominant interests; who would temper the acerbity of their controversies. You want a body of men to represent that considerable portion of the community who cannot be ranked under any of those striking and powerful classes to which I have referred, but who are in their aggregate equally important and valuable, and perhaps as numerous.

"Hitherto you have been able to effect this object; you have effected it by the existing borough system, which has given you a number of constituencies of various dimensions distributed over the country. No one for a moment pretends that the borough system in England was originally framed to represent all the classes and interests of the country; but it has been kept and cherished because the people found that, although not directly intended for such a purpose, yet indirectly it has accomplished that object; and hence I lay it down as a principle that if you subvert that system, you are bound to substitute for it machinery equally effective. That is all I contend for. I am not wedded to arrangements merely because they exist; but what I hope this House will not sanction is, that we should remove a machinery which performs the office we desire, unless we are certain that we can substitute for it a machinery equally effective. Now, there is one remarkable feature in the agitation of the new school.

It is not that they offer for the system they would subvert a substitute; it is not that they offer us new machinery for the old machinery they would abrogate; but it is a remarkable circumstance that they offer no substitute whatever. They lay down their inexorable principle; they carry it to its logical consequences, and the logical consequences would be that to this House, in the present state of the population, no doubt you would have men returned by large constituencies who would, in most instances, represent great wealth. I will make that concession; but when this House is assembled, how will it perform the duties of a House of Commons? I will tell you what must be the natural consequence of such a state of things. The House will lose, as a matter of course, its hold on the Executive. The House will assemble; it will have men sent to it, no doubt, of character and wealth, the great majority of them matured and advanced in life; and having met here, they will be unable to carry on the Executive of the country. Why? Because the experiment has been tried in every country, and the same result has occurred; because it is not in the power of one or two classes to give that variety of character and acquirement by which the administration of a country can be carried on. Well, then, if this House loses its hold over the Executive of the country, what happens? We fall back on a bureaucratic system, and we should find ourselves, after all our struggles, in the very same position from which in 1640 we had to extricate ourselves. Your administration would be carried on by a court minister, perhaps a court minion. It might not be in these times, but in some future time. The result of such a system would be to create an assembly where the members of parliament, though chosen by great constituencies, would be chosen from limited classes, and perhaps only from one class of the community. There is a new school of philosophers who hold that there is no such thing as progress—that nations move

in a circle, and that after a certain cycle they arrive at exactly the same place, and stand in precisely the same circumstances which they quitted two or three centuries before. I have no time now to solve a problem of that depth. Questions so profound require the leisure and abstraction of the Opposition benches. But if the population principle should be adopted, I should give in my adhesion to the new school of philosophy; and I feel persuaded that the House of Commons, after all its reform and reconstruction, would find itself in the same comparatively ignominious position from which the spirit and energy of the old English gentry emancipated it more than two centuries ago. Therefore I need not inform the House that it is no part of my duty to recommend it to adopt that principle. We cannot acknowledge that population, or property, or even property and population joined together, should be the sole principle on which the legislative system shall be constructed."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to discuss the details of the measure he had drawn up. He did not propose to alter the limits of the franchise, but to introduce into boroughs a new kind of franchise, founded upon personal property, and to give a vote to persons having property to the amount of £10 a year in the funds, bank stock, and East India stock. Also a person having £60 in the savings bank would, under the bill, be an elector for the borough in which he resided, as well as the recipients of pensions in the naval, military, and civil services amounting annually to £20. Dwellers in a portion of a house whose aggregate rent was £20 a year, would likewise have a vote. The suffrage would also be conferred upon graduates of the universities, ministers of religion, members of the legal profession and of the medical body, and upon certain schoolmasters. He had preferred to introduce this new kind of franchise into boroughs, instead of attempting to lower it. For such preference Mr. Disraeli gave the following reason:—

"I am ready to admit," he said, "that there are many persons quite capable of exercising the suffrage who do not live in £10 houses, and whom I should wish to see possessing the suffrage. But should we obtain that result by—I won't call it the vulgar expedient, because the epithet might be misinterpreted, though I should not use it in an offensive sense—but by the coarse and common expedient which is recommended, of what is called 'lowering the franchise in towns?' Now, I beg the House to consider for a moment what must be the effect of lowering the franchise in towns. Suppose that, instead of a £10 borough qualification, you had a £5 borough qualification? Well, the moment that you had a £5 borough qualification you would realize all those inconvenient results which are erroneously ascribed to the £10 qualification. You would then have a monotonous constituency. You would then have a constituency whose predominant opinions would be identical. You would then have a constituency who would return to parliament members holding the same ideas, the same opinions, the same sentiments; and all the variety which represents the English character would be entirely lost. You would then have in your borough constituency a predominant class; and certainly the spirit and genius of our constitution are adverse to the predominance of any class in this House. It certainly would be most injudicious, not to say intolerable, when we are guarding ourselves against the predominance of a territorial aristocracy and the predominance of a manufacturing and commercial oligarchy, that we should reform parliament by securing the predominance of a household democracy. I am convinced that that is not the mode in which you must improve and vary the elements of the present borough constituency."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to deal with the county franchise, prefacing his remarks with a review of the controversy respecting the Chandos clause in the bill of 1832.

The government were desirous of putting an end to the heart-burnings arising from that clause,* and of restoring the county constituency to its natural state, and of bringing about a general content and sympathy between the different portions of the constituent body. To effect this object the principle of identity of suffrage between the counties and towns would be recognized. "If the suffrages of the town are transferred to the county," explained Mr. Disraeli, "and the suffrages of the county transferred to the town, all those voters who, dwelling in a town, exercise their suffrage in the county by virtue of a county suffrage, will record their votes in the town; and the freeholder, resident in a town—subject to provisions in the bill which would prevent this constitutional instrument being turned to an improper use—will have a right to vote for the borough in which he resides. This, as well as the franchise founded on savings-banks, will open another avenue to the mechanic, whose virtue, prudence, intelligence, and frugality entitle him to enter into the privileged pale of the constituent body of the country. If this principle be adopted, a man will vote for the place where he resides, and with which he is substantially connected. Therefore the first measure would embody this logical consequence, that it would transfer the freeholders of the town from the county to the town." Boundary commissioners, appointed by the inclosure commissioners, were to visit the English boroughs, rearrange them, and adapt them to the altered circumstances of the times. Mr. Disraeli estimated that the effect of giving to coun-

ties a £10 franchise would add 200,000 to the county constituency.

The speaker then proceeded to state how the elective body was to be registered, and how it was to vote. Overseers of parishes would be required to furnish a list of owners as well as occupiers, which would be a self-acting register. The number of polling places was to be increased; every parish having 200 electors was to possess a polling place; every voter was to vote in the place where he resided, and those who preferred it might vote by polling papers instead of going to the hustings, due precautions being provided against fraud and personation.

Mr. Disraeli next had to deal with the delicate question of redistribution. "In attempting to deal with the question popularly designated parliamentary reform," he said, "Her Majesty's government have endeavoured, so far as their intelligence could guide them, to offer a proposition to the House which, consistently with their conception of the principles upon which the English constitution is founded, should secure for this country a complete representation. One of our first considerations was, of course, the electoral body, upon which I have treated at such length. But a complete representation does not depend merely upon the electoral body, however varied you may make its elements, however homogeneous its character. It also depends upon whether, in your system, the different interests of the country are adequately represented. Now, discarding for ever that principle of population upon which it has been my duty to make some remarks; accepting it as a truth that the functions of this House are to represent not the views of a numerical majority—not merely the gross influence of a predominant property, but the varied interests of the country—we have felt on this occasion it was incumbent on us diligently and even curiously to investigate the whole of England, and see whether there were interests not represented in this House whose views we should wish to be heard here; and

* The Chandos clause was the 20th clause of the Reform Bill of 1832. It gave the right of voting to the occupiers of lands or tenements of a rent of not less than £50 per annum. It had been moved as an amendment in committee of the reform bill of 1831, by the Marquis of Chandos, afterwards Duke of Buckingham. It was opposed by Lord John Russell, but supported by Mr. Hume and other Liberals, who were desirous of as wide an extension of the suffrage as possible; and was carried against the government by a majority of eighty-four, August 18, 1831. Ministers incorporated it in their measure, and although that Reform Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, the clause was introduced in the bill of 1832, and was carried, on a division, by a majority of 240.

whether the general representation of the country could be matured and completed. In undertaking this office, it must not be supposed that we have been animated by a feeling that we would only do that which the hard necessity of the case required. Had we been so influenced, it is possible we might have brought forward a measure that would have served the purpose of the moment, and yet left seeds behind us which might have germinated in future troubles, controversies, and anxieties. We have been sincerely desirous to adapt the scheme of 1832 to the England of 1859, and to induce the House to come to a general settlement, whether as regards the exercise of the franchise or the direct representation in this House of the various interests of the community, which should take this question for a long period out of the agitating thoughts of men. We have sought to offer to the country, in the hope that it will meet with its calm and serious approval, what we believe to be a just and, I will not say a final, but conclusive settlement. Finality, sir, is not the language of politics. But it is our duty to propose an arrangement which, so far as the circumstances of the age in which we live can influence our opinion, will be a conclusive settlement. And we have laid it down as our task to consider, without any respect to persons, what we honestly think are the interests of the country that are not represented, but which we should at this moment counsel the House to add to their numbers."

The deliberations of the government had ended in the following recommendations:—Four members were to be added to the West Riding of Yorkshire, two to South Lancashire, and two to Middlesex. The towns of Hartlepool, Birkenhead, West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Burnley, Staley-bridge, Croydon, and Gravesend, were to be represented. These additions were to be effected by the towns of Honiton, Thetford, Totness, Harwich, Evesham, Wells, Richmond, Marlborough, Leominster, Lym-

ington, Ludlow, Andover, Knaresborough, Tewkesbury, and Maldon, sending in the future only one member instead of two to parliament. Mr. Disraeli declined to interfere with the Roman Catholic borough of Arundel, and he gave his reasons. "In all those rattling schemes," he said, "of disfranchisement with which we were favoured during the autumn, when every gentleman thought he could sit down at his table and reconstruct the venerable fabric of the English constitution—if there was one point more than another on which these Utopian meddlers agreed—if there was one enemy which they were all resolved to hunt to death—it was the borough of Arundel. There every vice of the system seemed to be congregated—a small population, a small constituency, absolute nomination. Well now, sir, that is very well for autumnal agitation; but let us see how it practically works in this ancient and famous community in which it is our pride and privilege to live. There are 900,000 Roman Catholics in England, scattered and dispersed in every town and county—of course a minority. What means have they of being represented in this House, especially in the present, as I deem it, unfortunate state of feeling in England with regard to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects? There is one English Roman Catholic member of parliament, a man who bears a name that will ever be honoured by England and Englishmen; and practically, and in the spirit of the English constitution, the 900,000 Roman Catholics of England, men, many of them, of ancient lineage and vast possessions, whose feelings all must respect, even if they do not agree with them in every particular, find a representative in the borough of Arundel. That is the practical working of our constitution. You talk of the small numbers of the constituency of Arundel; 900,000 Roman Catholics! Why, it is more than the West Riding of Yorkshire; it is double the Tower Hamlets."

Mr. Disraeli thus concluded his speech:—"I have now, sir, touched upon those topics which it was my duty to lay before the House this evening. I have omitted many things that I ought to have said, and I have no doubt I may have said some things that I ought to have omitted. Such errors are inevitable in treating so large and so various a theme, but I am sure the House will remember that there will be many opportunities for me to enter into necessary explanations, and will treat an occasion like the present with generous forbearance. Sir, having described as clearly as I could the principal provisions of our bill to the House, I shall say no more. I believe that this is a measure wise, prudent, and adequate to the occasion. I earnestly hope the House may adopt it. I believe it is a Conservative measure, using that epithet in no limited or partial sense, but in the highest and holiest interpretation of which it is capable. I can say sincerely that those who framed this measure are men who reverence the past, are proud of the present, but are confident of the future. Such as it is, I now submit it for the consideration of the House of Commons, convinced that they will deal with it as becomes the representatives of a wise and understanding people."

Such were the provisions of the first reform bill framed by a Conservative cabinet. The scheme was, as Mr. Disraeli had avowed, eminently conservative. It did not, like that proposed by Mr. Bright, reform parliament at the expense of the constitution, but preserved all that was deserving, and removed much that had led to abuse. It extended the area without changing the balance of power. It proved the falseness of the theory that a numerical majority ought to govern the land of a free country. It recognized that the purpose of popular institutions was to represent the varied and numerous interests of which a free and wealthy community was composed. It was not conceived in a spirit hostile to existing institutions, but was based on the assumption that such institutions were substantially conformable to the wishes of the people, and adequate to their wants. Unlike the various radical schemes propounded during the autumn, though it admitted that the popular power might be safely extended, it refused to place the intelligence or the wealth of the country at the mercy of a numerical majority. In short, it altered the distribution of political power, but did not revolutionize it. Yet, in spite of these recommendations, it was to share, as we shall see, the fate of its predecessors.

CHAPTER XVII.

AGAIN IN OPPOSITION.

THERE are certain measures about which, when introduced to parliament, it becomes difficult to foretell their future; they apparently receive the approval of the House of Commons, they are supported by the press, the country appears in favour of them, and it is only when subsequently criticised and examined in committee, that we are able to decide whether acceptance or rejection is to be their lot. On the other hand, there are measures about which there is no uncertainty; from the very night when the House accords its leave for them to be brought in their success is assured, and before the first reading they are virtually enrolled in the statute-book. Again, there are measures upon which both the House and the country swiftly decide, and resolve to have none of them. The Conservative Reform Bill belonged to this last class. Before the debate of the first night had closed, it was evident that the measure was doomed to rejection. Two circumstances adverse to its progress had occurred at the very outset of its career. The cabinet was not unanimous as to the clauses in the bill, and two ministers had tendered their resignations. The disagreement had arisen upon the extension of the county franchise, which was strongly disapproved of both by Mr. Spencer Walpole, and by that accurate interpreter of county instincts, Mr. Henley. Writing to Lord Derby a month before the bill was laid upon the table of the House, Mr. Walpole said, "I regret to say that I am about to take the most painful step which I have ever had to take in the whole of my life. I am going to request you to place my resignation in Her Majesty's hands, because I find it utterly impossible for me to sanction or countenance the course of

policy which the government have now determined to adopt on the important subject of parliamentary reform. I cannot help saying that the measure which the cabinet are prepared to recommend is one which we should all of us have stoutly opposed, if either Lord Palmerston or Lord John Russell had ventured to bring it forward. Under all these circumstances, I have no alternative but to repeat the request with which I commenced; and I shall therefore consider myself as only holding the seals of office until you can conveniently fill up my place." Mr. Henley offered similar objections, and adopted the same course as Mr. Walpole.

Thus the bill came before parliament with the damaging reputation of a measure upon which the cabinet had been divided, and which had led to the secession of two of its more important members. There was also another unfavourable circumstance. By an official fraud, which has never yet been discovered, the scheme of the reform bill had appeared in the *Times* several hours before Mr. Disraeli rose up to lay his measure before the House. Hence, members had possessed the unusual advantage of carefully studying the scope and tendency of a bill before it had been introduced. First impressions are not always permanent, but they have it in their power to exercise no little influence upon the mind of a nation at a critical moment. Members who were opposed to the bill were able, on the very night it was announced, to rise one after the other and offer a searching and carefully considered criticism upon the subject which, when reproduced next morning in the newspapers, tended at once to prejudice the country against the government scheme. A measure

must be very strong in itself, or else be very strongly supported, to brave at the outset no mere impromptu objections, but those based on a studied and deliberate investigation of its merits.

No sooner had Mr. Disraeli taken his seat, after a speech of three hours and a half, than the popular chamber resounded with criticisms, objections, and remonstrances. Few—very few—on the night of its introduction were in favour of the bill. The majority were undoubtedly hostile. The Scotch members complained that the interests of Scotland had not been fairly dealt with in the bill. Irish members followed suit. The disfranchisement of those persons who voted for counties in respect of property within boroughs was strongly disapproved of. The right of voting in boroughs to be conferred upon the 40s. freeholders was objected to, since there was no description of vote so easily fabricated as that of the 40s. freeholders. The extension of the franchise to lodgers would, it was said, open a great door to fraud. Then it was made matter for loud complaint that the franchise in the boroughs throughout the country had not been extended; that the working classes were not fairly dealt with; the bill, other Radicals grumbled, would not give one iota of power to the working classes of the country; and that the "fancy franchises," as Mr. Bright called them, were absurd. The spirit of the Opposition was sounded in the concluding words of Mr. Roebuck, "I say emphatically that every stage of the bill must be opposed; steadfastly opposed by every friend of the people in the House."

When objections had run their course, Mr. Disraeli replied. He dealt first with the two reasons which Lord John Russell had brought forward as causing him to disapprove of the bill. "The noble Lord," said Mr. Disraeli, "rests his opposition to this measure on two grand principles. First of all, he cannot consent to any measure which disfranchises in counties the ancient freeholds which have existed for three or

four hundred years. I have had to look into this subject, and I am sorry to say that the great majority of the freeholds which I have considered are not of that ancient duration. They are of much more modern days, and have been created in a much simpler and more manufacturing style than the territorial traditions of the noble lord seem to contemplate. "But," says the noble lord, "I will never consent to it; I will never be party to a bill which disfranchises the hard-working man." What did the noble lord do in his last reform bill. What was the first feature in his last bill? Why, a proposition to disfranchise all the freemen in England. So much for this principle of the noble lord. A great and perilous innovation to restrict the borough freeholders to vote in the locality in which their qualification exists! Why, if I mistake not, it was part of the first reform bill. It is an innovation which has been discussed in this House often and often; that was projected by the political colleagues of the noble lord, and which has, I believe, been accepted by the good sense of the country for a considerable period. It is clear that the moment you consider the county franchise in the spirit in which, on the part of the government, I have attempted to consider it to-day, the moment you put an end to that exclusive character which has been complained of in this debate, you must give the counties, not to any particular order or exclusive class, but to the inhabitants of the counties, and those who have a substantial local interest in them; and I feel persuaded that the justness of this arrangement, the logical sequence, as it is, of recognizing the identity of the suffrage, will not meet with that fate which has been predicted for it by honourable gentlemen below the gangway, but will be accepted by the good sense of the country."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the complaint that nothing had been done in the bill for the working classes. "What we have done for the working classes," explained the chancellor of the exchequer, "may not sound



Engraved by J. Smith from a Photograph by G. Parker.

HENRY MAF. JOSEPH WARNER HENLEY, M.P.

so large as some of the plans which are commonly advocated for their advancement. There is nothing more easy than to make a speech, and say that you are in favour of the working classes, and that you think they ought to have this power and that privilege; but then you," he said, addressing the Opposition, "never pass any measures to do anything for the working classes. The working classes will, I think, be sensible of the advantage which they will derive from this measure, which I hope and believe will pass. Here are two avenues to the constituent power open to all working men who possess those qualities which would entitle them to exercise that power—the savings bank suffrage and the 40s. freehold. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Bright) tells me that we know nothing of the working classes, and arrogates to himself the peculiar privilege of being acquainted with their wants, wishes, and requirements. He says that I can know nothing about the working classes, that I only talk to my friends behind me, and that they know nothing about the working classes. My friends know much more than the honourable gentleman thinks, and I can assure him that I do converse with others than my friends, and that I have as good means as he has of learning what are the feelings of the working classes. I will tell the honourable gentleman the things that have been represented to me, on what I believe to be the very best authority, and from members of the working classes most distinguished by their personal and moral qualities and intelligence. There were two things which they impressed upon me. Not knowing of the 40s. franchise, they said that that which they valued most of all was the savings bank suffrage; and that in which they had the least confidence were the propositions of the honourable member for Birmingham.* They told me

that they could not trust the honourable member for Birmingham; they were not satisfied that under his plan the working men would exercise that privilege. But they said—'We clearly understand what a savings bank suffrage means.' We may invent more, we may devise other schemes, but this is a great boon, and one that will be much appreciated by the working classes. I believe that is the case."

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by denying that Scotland had been treated cavalierly, and that if Ireland wished it her case with regard to reform would be duly considered. In the interval between the first and second reading of the bill, it became apparent that the measure, the more it was discussed, the more it was disapproved of. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Henley had openly stated the reasons which had now forced them to retire from the cabinet, and their withdrawal had not tended to strengthen the hands of the government. The chief objection was directed against the clause which proposed to take away from freeholders in boroughs the franchise by which they were qualified to vote for counties; this proposal was regarded by many as an indirect method of neutralizing the concession of the county franchise to the £10 freeholders, and excited much opposition. A few days after the introduction of the bill, Lord John Russell gave notice that he would move the following resolution:—"That this House is of opinion that it is neither just nor politic to interfere, in the manner proposed in this bill, with the freehold franchise as hitherto exercised in the counties in England and Wales; and that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy this House or the country, which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure."

* In the reform bill that Mr. Bright had proposed to his enthusiastic auditors at Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, he conferred the borough franchise on all persons rated to the relief of the poor, and on all lodgers who paid a rent of ten pounds; he reduced the franchise in the counties to a ten-pound rental, laying the expenses of the returning-

officer on the county or borough rate; he prescribed that votes should be taken by ballot; he wholly disfranchised eighty-six boroughs, taking away one member from thirty-four other boroughs, and transferring the seats thus obtained to the larger towns, counties, and divisions of counties.

1859) on the second reading of the bill, which lasted several nights, Lord John Russell began the discussion by moving his amendment. The principle of the bill was, he said, that the suffrage throughout the country in counties and boroughs should be uniform, or as Mr. Disraeli expressed it, identical. That principle, he contended, would completely change the constitution of the country, destroy ancient rights, deprive worthy persons of their county votes, and take away from the country constituencies one of the liberal elements. Small boroughs would be flooded with faggot votes; "say that 40s. freeholds may be formed in boroughs, and what remains of the independence they acquired from the £10 franchise?" He considered the bill "to be a measure of a most noxious, injurious, and dangerous character." Mr. Sidney Herbert supported the amendment. The object of the House was, he said, "to arrive at a franchise moderately extended for boroughs, and largely extended for counties." He disputed the validity of the uniformity of suffrage as a security against indefinite extension of the franchise, and justified the retaining the small boroughs. Mr. Bright considered that the bill got rid of the most independent electors from counties, and insidiously proposed to alter the boundaries of boroughs to complete the work. Its object was to make the representation of counties more exclusively territorial, which was most undesirable. Lord Palmerston complained that the government had inserted in their bill provisions totally inconsistent with the principles of the constitution, committing an act of injustice against those county freeholders who happened to reside in boroughs, and identifying the town and county franchise, thereby destroying an ancient principle of the constitution which provided for a marked distinction between them, and actually establishing electoral districts. He thus concluded:—

"Some persons say the ministry will resign. Sir, I believe no such thing. I

think it will be a dereliction of duty on their part if they do resign. I do not want them to resign. I say to them, as I think Voltaire said of some minister who had incurred his displeasure, 'I won't punish him; I won't send him to prison; I condemn him to keep his place.' They took the government with its engagements. They undertook a measure of reform, and they will be flinching from their duty to the crown and the country if, in consequence of such a vote as that proposed by my noble friend, they fling up their places, and throw upon us the difficulty of dealing with this subject. In ordinary cases, I am quite ready to admit, when a question arises out of the contests of two political parties—when that question is one, for instance, relating to our foreign relations—a question of peace or war, or one of general policy, with respect to which the government and the majority of the House of Commons may disagree—it would be a perfectly constitutional course for them to pursue to appeal to the country, and that the majority by whom their conduct happened to be censured should afford them every facility in making that appeal; that, however, is not the present question. Is it right, I ask, that the government should throw the British constitution to be scrambled for and discussed upon every hustings throughout the country? Is that the course which a Conservative administration thinks it its duty to pursue? I do not believe they would act so if they could; and I believe they could not if they would."

Sir James Graham said the bill was "too clever by half," and that it had been so framed as to obtain support from every quarter of the House; the imperfections of 1832, he contended, instead of being removed were aggravated by this Conservative measure. Mr. Gladstone opposed both the bill and the amendment. He could not, he observed, be a party to the disfranchisement of the county freeholders residing in boroughs; nor a party to the uniformity of the franchise, nor a party to a reform



Engraved by G. J. Stodart from a Photograph by E. Debenham

THE RIGHT HON. EARL CAIRNS.





bill which did not lower the suffrages in boroughs. Upon the advantages of retaining the smaller boroughs he thus expressed himself. In a former portion of this work we have stated how serviceable were the nomination boroughs to young men of ability, and perhaps of slender fortunes, who were desirous of embracing a parliamentary career; at the present day the clever but poor young man is practically excluded from the House of Commons. "Allow me," Mr. Gladstone said, "in explanation of my meaning, to state the case of six men—Mr. Pelham, Lord Chatham, Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning, and Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Pelham entered this House for the borough of Seaford, in 1719, at the age of twenty-two; Lord Chatham entered it in 1735, for Old Sarum, at the age of twenty-six; Mr. Fox in 1764, for Midhurst, at the age, I think, of twenty; Mr. Pitt in 1781, for Appleby, at the age of twenty-one; Mr. Canning in 1793, for Newport, at the age of twenty-two; and Sir Robert Peel in 1809, for the City of Cashel, at the age of twenty-one. Now here are six men, every one of whom was a leader in this House. I take them because the youngest is older than the youngest of those who now sit here, and because the mention of their names can give rise to no personal feeling. Here are six men whom you cannot match out of the history of the British House of Commons for the hundred years which precede our own day. Every one of them was a leader in this House; almost every one of them was a prime minister. All of them entered parliament for one of those boroughs where influence of different kinds prevailed. Every one of them might, if he had chosen, after giving proof of his powers in this House, have sat for any of the open constituencies of the country; and many of them did so. Mr. Pelham, after sitting for Seaford in one parliament, represented Sussex for all the rest of his life; Lord Chatham never, I think, represented an open constituency; Mr. Fox, after sitting for Midhurst, became the chosen for West-

minster; Mr. Pitt went from Appleby at a very early age to the University of Cambridge; Mr. Canning went from Newport to Liverpool; and Sir Robert Peel from Cashel to the University of Oxford. Now, what was the case of Sir Robert Peel? The university, on account of a conscientious difference of opinion, refused the continuance of his services. They might have been lost to the British parliament—at that moment at all events. But in Westbury he found an immediate refuge—for so it must be called; and he continued to sit for a small borough for the remainder of his life. Mr. Canning, in the same way, not losing but resigning the representation of Liverpool, found it more conducive to the public business that he should become the representative of a small borough for the rest of his days. What does this show? It shows that small boroughs were the nursery-ground in which these men were educated—men who not only were destined to lead this House, to govern the country, to be the strength of England at home and its ornament abroad, but who likewise, when once they had an opportunity of proving their powers in this House, became the chosen of large constituencies, and the favourites of the nation."

On the Conservative side of the House the two ablest defenders of the government measure were Sir Hugh Cairns and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. The debate was brought to a close by the chancellor of the exchequer (March 31, 1859). "After seven nights' debate," he began, "conducted with a vigour and variety which have sustained the reputation of the House, it is now my duty to examine how far that measure which, five weeks ago, I had the honour to introduce on the part of the ministry, has been affected by this discussion, and to indicate the course which Her Majesty's government think it their duty to recommend to the House this night to adopt with respect to it. Sir, it is some ten years since, or nearly so, that the prime minister of this country, then

the leader of this House, occupying the very seat which I now fill, and being one of the principal promoters and projectors of the Reform Act of 1832, announced the deliberate opinion of himself and of his cabinet to be that the famous settlement of 1832 was, in their judgment, no longer satisfactory and sufficient. And from that period unto the present, with successive ministries formed from different parties, the same opinion has been held, the same advice to parliament has been given. The crown has been pledged—the parliament has been pledged—the ministry has been pledged—to attempt to amend the representation of the people; but this is the first occasion on which a bill with that object has been offered to this House for the second reading; and how am I met under these circumstances?

“Now, what is this bill which I have introduced? It is founded on three great principles. And we have had so much discussion about principles and about details, that the House will permit me to remind it what those three great principles are. The first principle is, that the constituent body of this country shall be increased by the introduction to it of a large number of persons, and of a vast variety of the population, who shall in future possess the suffrage. Under this bill, in pursuance of that principle, I believe as great an addition would be made to the constituent body as was made by the Reform Act of 1832. By the Reform Act of 1832 I believe 400,000 persons were added to the constituency. By the bill which I introduced to the House five weeks ago, I believe that a number certainly not less than that will be added to the present electoral body. The second principle on which this bill is founded is, that those large communities whose wealth and population and distinctive character have been developed since the Act of 1832 shall be summoned to direct representation in this House. That is the second great principle. The third principle is, that this bill main-

tains generally the present borough system of representation in this country, on the ground that no efficient substitute has yet been offered for it; and on the ground also that it is the only means by which you can obtain an adequate representation of the various interests and classes of the country; and that all other proposed changes would only lead to the predominance of a numerical majority of the population. Now, these are the three great principles upon which this bill is founded. . . . And I may be permitted to say that I believe a majority, and a large majority of this House, is in favour of those three principles. Now, if this be the case, I should naturally have felt surprise at receiving a fierce opposition to the second reading of the bill. With the conviction I have that a majority of the House is in favour of the principles on which this bill is founded, I had a right to count on success on the second reading.

“But we are not permitted to bring the question to that issue. With a majority of this House in favour of the principles upon which this bill is founded, this measure is not to be tried upon its principles; but a resolution is thrust into your hands, which asks the House to commit itself on two points, which are, after all, points of detail which are unquestionably, as I will show, points of detail, and which ought to be considered in committee. What are the two objections to which the amendment of the noble lord refers? I will touch upon one, certainly of the least importance, with regard to what the noble lord calls the disfranchisement of freeholders. Now, I cannot agree that any freeholder is disfranchised by this bill. I think I might, with equal justice, say that the bill provides for the enfranchisement of freeholders; but for the sake of discussion I will take the statement of the noble lord. But is this the first bill to amend the representation of the people in which there has been a measure of disfranchisement? The noble lord has had great experience in reform bills; will he refer me to any bill with which he was

ever connected in which there was not a large measure of disfranchisement? Why, in the bill of 1831 and 1832 the whole constituent body of the cities and boroughs of England, amounting in number to nearly 100,000 persons, was partially or completely disfranchised. Why, the noble lord was not content on that occasion to propose the disfranchisement of the whole constituencies of all the cities and towns of the kingdom, but he carried on that occasion, to a great extent, the disfranchisement of the freeholders in the counties. Every freeholder who lived in one of the great towns that then was first summoned to parliament, found, to use the language of the noble lord, that the bill disfranchised him as a freeholder of the county, and he became afterwards a voter for the borough in which he resided only in right of occupation."

Mr. Disraeli then entered upon a full history of the £10 county franchise. He showed how impracticable it would be to propose, as so many in the course of the debate had desired, a £20 occupation franchise for counties. Previous governments had opposed the reduction of the occupation franchise in counties to £10, and had proposed a £20 occupation franchise for counties. With what result? They had failed, and had been defeated. Warned by this lesson the coalition cabinet in 1854 had therefore proposed, in their "large and comprehensive measure of parliamentary reform," to establish in the counties a £10 occupation franchise.

"Now, who were the men," cried Mr. Disraeli, "who recommended in 1854 this principle of a £10 occupation franchise? Why, sir, among these counsellors were many of the most distinguished members of this House. The noble lord was, of course, there, and was the organ of the government by whom the measure was brought forward. There was the right hon. baronet the member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham). There was also the noble Viscount the member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston). There were also,

as members of that cabinet, the right hon. gentleman the member for Wiltshire (Mr. Sidney Herbert) and the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of Oxford (Mr. Gladstone). Are we to suppose—considering all the circumstances under which these distinguished members of the cabinet acted—that they were trifling with this important subject? Can we believe for a moment that they would have given their assent to that proposition unless they had bestowed their most serious attention to the subject, with a due sense of the responsibility they had undertaken? We know now—for the matter is no secret, I can refer to it without difficulty—we know, I say, that there was discord and dissension in the cabinet upon this subject of reform. That cabinet was also so unfortunate upon it as to lose a colleague; though more fortunate than ours, that colleague returned to them. The retirement of the noble viscount the member for Tiverton, in the autumn, proved that the decision at which the cabinet had arrived was not hastily formed, but that it was a question which they had considered with much pains, and with the fullest sense of their duty. Now, I ask, did the noble viscount quit the cabinet on account of the £10 franchise? If so, he must, by his returning back to the cabinet, have been fully convinced by the arguments of his colleagues. If the noble viscount quitted the cabinet on account of the £10 franchise proposed, why did not his distinguished colleagues who shared his opinions follow his example? Yet, sir, to my surprise, it is from the lips of those gentlemen I now hear that the solution of all these difficulties is to be found in the proposition, acceptable they say to the majority, of a £20 franchise for counties."

Mr. Disraeli next proceeded to prove how unpopular had been the £20 franchise, and how Lord Palmerston had nearly escaped defeat when advocating it. "What," he asked, "would be our position if we had

proposed a £20 franchise? I can tell you in a moment what it would be. The struggle that is now taking place would have taken place on that point, and I think with much greater advantage to the noble lord, because then he would have been the champion of the House of Commons, whose deliberate and recorded opinions would have been outraged by our proposition; and no doubt the noble lord would have carried his views against the government. What would be our position had we followed the noble lord's present advice, so contrary to his former policy, and now even smiled at with demureness by the hon. member for Birmingham? Our position would have been this—had we proposed a £20 franchise for counties and a £6 for boroughs, we should have been obliged to commence our labours in committee, had we ever got there, with a £10 franchise for counties and a £6 for boroughs."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the accusation that he had omitted the interests of the working classes in his measure. His bill was not democratic enough. He evidently was afraid of the people. "What are the people?" he exclaimed, "and why should I fear? Why, sir, I have no apprehension myself that, if you had manhood suffrage to-morrow, the honest, brave, and good-natured people of England would resort to pillage, incendiarism, and massacre. Who expects that? But though I would do as much justice to the qualities of our countrymen as any gentleman in this House—though I may not indulge in high-flown and far-fetched expressions with respect to them like those we have listened to, *for the people may have their parasites as well as monarchs and aristocracies*—yet I have no doubt that, whatever may be their high qualities, our countrymen are subject to the same political laws that affect the condition of all other communities and nations. If you establish a democracy you must in due season reap the fruits of a democracy.

You will in due season have great impatience of the public burdens combined in due season with great increase of the public expenditure. You will in due season reap the fruits of such united influence. You will in due season have wars entered into from passion and not from reason; and you will in due season submit to peace ignominiously sought and ignominiously obtained, which will diminish your authority and perhaps endanger your independence. You will in due season, with a democracy, find that your property is less valuable, and that your freedom is less complete. I doubt not when there has been realized a sufficient quantity of disaffection and dismay, the good sense of this country will come to the rally, and that you will obtain some remedy for your grievances and some redress for your wrongs, by the process through which alone it can be obtained—by that process which may render your property more secure, but which will not render your liberty more eminent. I know that I shall be told that these are old-fashioned notions. The hon. member for Birmingham has said the same on the platform, which he is always praising and certainly adorns; he will point to the instance of the United States of America, and say, 'This shows how completely erroneous are the notions entertained in Europe of democracy.' But I say, between Europe and the United States there is no sort of analogy. I say the United States of America are colonies; for a country, though independent, does not cease to be a colony; and they are not only colonies, but they are absolutely colonizing, and none of the conditions obtain in them which regulate the social system of the ancient communities of this quarter of the globe. That being my opinion, I cannot look upon what is called reduction of the franchise in boroughs but with alarm; and I have never yet met any argument which fairly encounters the objections that are urged to it. You cannot encounter it by sentimental assertions of the good

qualities of the working classes. The greater their good qualities the greater the danger. If you lay down as a principle that they are to enter the constituent body, not as individuals, but as a multitude, they must be the predominant class from their number; and if you dwell on their intelligence, you only increase the power they will exercise."

But was it true, he asked, that he had excluded the working classes? He had inserted in his bill a variety of franchises which would introduce numerous classes into the constituency with different pursuits and with different interests, and he felt that by the establishment of the same occupation-franchise in counties and in boroughs he would prevent the introduction of the mere multitude, which, if once he began the reduction of the borough franchise, would ultimately and speedily be accomplished, and at the same time supply means by which the most intelligent and the most meritorious of the working classes could enter into the great national constituent body. Was the policy not sound? Was it not a wise and effective policy? To that policy three objections had been urged in debate. Lord John Russell objected to it, because he was against what he called "uniformity of franchise"—a phrase that had never escaped his (Mr. Disraeli's) lips. Yet Lord John had used that phrase with respect to a measure containing the greatest variety of franchises ever included in a reform bill! Personal property, for the first time, was completely admitted as a qualification for the electoral privilege. There was scarcely a class and scarcely a species of property which was not considered in that unprecedented variety of franchises; and still Lord John rose to say, "I oppose the bill because I object to a uniformity of franchise!" Then the noble lord was against uniformity of franchise in counties and boroughs. But how had the noble lord dealt with that matter? He had spoken throughout the debate as if it was an innovation unknown and unprecedented

in our political annals. "It is unconstitutional; it is noxious; it is pernicious; it is unjust;" and for that reason he opposed the bill in his speeches—and yet he never referred to the point in his resolution. There was nothing in Lord John's resolution against the uniformity or identity of franchise, because they might reduce or extend the franchise, and yet might preserve uniformity; but in his speeches the noble lord was extremely vehement against that unheard-of, that unconstitutional system. "What," asked the chancellor of the exchequer, "has the noble lord himself done on this subject? What was the course pursued by the noble lord, the advocate *κατ' ἐξοχήν* of parliamentary reform? The noble lord, as a member of Lord Aberdeen's government, as the principal organ of the government by whom that mature plan of reform was introduced, proposed on that occasion five new franchises, with the consent of the right hon. members for Wiltshire, Carlisle, and the University of Oxford, and also with the consent of the noble viscount the member for Tiverton. He proposed five new franchises, and at the same time that they should be alike extended to counties and boroughs. So much for identity and uniformity! The noble lord failed for the moment in his praiseworthy attempt; but that was a policy which announced that the noble lord was in favour of identity of suffrage in county and town; in favour of a great variety of franchises, and that they should be enjoyed equally by borough and by county. The noble lord was extremely disappointed by the failure of his second bill for parliamentary reform, and he made an announcement in this House, which I well recollect—that he was convinced the time had gone by when, on subjects of reform, what are called general and comprehensive measures could be passed; and he therefore intended to devote himself in future to the support of the measure introduced by the hon. member for Surrey (Mr. Locke-King). The

noble lord acted consistently with that declaration, for he has voted invariably in favour of that motion, which establishes an identity between the borough and the county suffrage. So, therefore, in the proposal for five franchises, which by accident failed, and in the systematic policy that he has pursued since, the noble lord has exhibited a consistent determination to support that very principle of identity or uniformity (as he erroneously calls it) of suffrage, which now he denounces as an unheard-of innovation."

After maintaining that the working classes would, under his bill, be admitted in a manner which would be satisfactory to them when brought into operation, and in a fashion consistent with the principles of the constitution, Mr. Disraeli indulged in a personal attack upon Lord John Russell, and at the same time contended that the policy of the government had been beneficial to the country. "Sir, I must now say one word in reference to the noble proposer of this amendment. . . . I have no wish, no intention—from the bottom of my heart I say it—to impute any motives to the noble lord unworthy his character or his position. The noble lord may remember that when in 1854, at a moment of great personal distress, he withdrew, not without emotion, his reform bill, and some reproaches and some jeers were not spared him from his own side, I offered to him the unaffected tribute of the personal respect of the gentlemen who then sat opposite to him. I do not think that there is a man who has sat long in this House but must honour the character of the noble lord. I admire that character. I admire his great parliamentary talents. I admire his ambition. Sir, it is not wise in this House to scrutinize with too much severity every act and every word of those who are intrusted with the conduct of the parties in this House. In the fierce struggle of public life, and in the intense competition of this scene, one on whom devolves the lead of a party is called on for such constant action and such prompt

decision that he must indeed be a wise and favoured being who can look back to everything that he has done without regret, and who may not have used words over which memory may mourn. But I am persuaded that neither the noble lord nor any of his friends would desire that in this House there should be any diminution of that free and frank criticism upon the conduct of public men which has always been a part, and not the least valuable part, of our parliamentary life and manners. Therefore, I am sure that the noble lord will not feel offended with me if I tell him, that I think there is one quality in his character which has rather marred than made his fortunes. It is a restlessness which will not brook that delay and that patience needed in our constitutional government for the conduct of public affairs. The moment that the noble lord is not in power, he appears to me to live in an atmosphere of coalitions, combinations, *coups d'état*, and cunning resolutions. An Appropriation Clause may happen to every man once in his life. But there is only one man living of whom it can be said that in 1835 he overthrew the government of Sir Robert Peel upon an impracticable pretext; that in 1852 he overthrew the government of Lord Derby with an objectless coalition; that in 1855 he overthrew the government of Lord Aberdeen by a personal *coup d'état*; and that in 1857 he overthrew the government of the noble lord the member for Tiverton by a parliamentary manœuvre.

"Now, sir, I beg the noble lord at this moment to throw the vision of his memory for an instant back to the year 1852. He sat before me then, the head of a mighty host. He drew the fatal arrow that was to destroy our government. He succeeded. He destroyed in breathless haste the government of Lord Derby; but did he destroy nothing else? Did he not destroy also the position of a great statesman? Did he not destroy almost the great historic party of which he was once the proud and honoured chief? The noble lord

does not sit opposite me now; but had he not hurried the catastrophe of 1852, and had he bided his time, according to the periodic habit of our constitution, he would have returned to these benches the head of that great party of which he was once the chief and proudest ornament. What has the noble lord done now, and what is the moment that he has chosen for this party attack—an attack which was not necessary to the vindication of his policy, or for the assertion of those principles which I believe he sincerely holds? I brought forward on the part of the government a measure, founded on approved principles, for which fair play and custom would have insured a second reading. The discussion on the questions which the noble lord has thrust, as it were, into the Speaker's hand would, in the due course of parliamentary routine, have been postponed yet for some time. But what is the moment which the noble lord has chosen to precipitate this struggle? A moment the most critical in the affairs of this country and of Europe for many years past. The noble lord well knows that some weeks ago I came down to the table of this House, and informed the House that important negotiations were going on. The noble lord has other means of information besides those supplied to this House. The noble lord, I doubt not, is well informed of the present state of public affairs, and he could not have been unmindful of them in the introductory address to his resolution, although that resolution related only to a domestic subject; for the noble lord could even that night think fit to cast a sneer at the individual to whom is intrusted at this moment the most awful responsibility that ever fell to the lot of a minister. At a moment when it was of vital importance that the authority of the government should not be interfered with or embarrassed—at a moment, too, of all others, and of all men, when the minister for foreign affairs should not be held up to public distrust—the noble lord chooses that moment for a

party attack and for a personal sneer.* I should not be acting with frankness and fairness to the House, if I concealed the fact that the conduct of the noble lord has been most embarrassing to the government. I declare it on my responsibility as a minister that the conduct of the noble lord has produced injurious effects on the public service.

"But, sir, I have such confidence in the integrity of our allies—I have such confidence in the energy and resources of that colleague against whom the noble lord directed this sneer—I have such confidence, above all, in the patriotism of the House of Commons, that I believe the division of to-night will confound the calculations and the combinations of the noble lord, and will assist, and perhaps insure, the peace of Europe. The noble lord—who on these occasions is always in the habit of introducing the question of dissolution—told me the other night that he was ready for the hustings, and that he should brandish upon them the bill that I had introduced. In the office over which it is my honour to preside I have often an opportunity of meeting some of the principal constituents of the noble lord—great merchants and eminent bankers of this metropolis; men of different opinions, agreeing in nothing else but in their readiness at all times to assist the administration of this country. I am indebted as much as my predecessors undoubtedly were to their wise counsel and their zealous aid; but I can tell the noble lord that, when they come to my office, it is not parliamentary reform that they speak about, it is not financial interests that most concern them, but what they say is, 'Peace!—let the government give us peace; it is the only thing that we require. Our energies are depressed, our commerce circumscribed, and our enterprise crippled; but let the government secure for us peace, and then

* Lord John Russell had sneered at its having been said that the presence of Lord Malmesbury at the Foreign Office was a security for peace, and wondered who could be duped by such an assertion.

they will be entitled to the gratitude and confidence of their country.' I thought, sir, we had secured peace—I thought the time had arrived when I might have come down to this House and told them that the dark disquietude that for three months has overshadowed Europe had passed away—had been succeeded by serenity and repose. But for this untoward, this unhappy motion of the noble lord, that might have been. And I tell the noble lord that when he goes to the hustings of which he talks, and brandishes this bill, he will find the minds of his constituents full of another matter, and that they will demand from him the reasons for the course he has adopted."

He then defended the policy the government had pursued:—

"Sir, it is something more than a year ago that Her Majesty summoned Lord Derby to her councils. Lord Derby then, as on all other occasions, expressed to Her Majesty his readiness, as a last resource, to serve his sovereign; but he also felt it his duty then to explain to the queen that his position in the House of Commons had been much weakened by the last general election, and that he could not count in the following of his friends on more, probably, than one-third of the members of this House; and, sir, under these circumstances Lord Derby humbly submitted to Her Majesty his wish that Her Majesty would reconsider her intention, and deign to pause before Her Majesty commanded him to undertake so difficult a task. The queen was graciously pleased to act on that suggestion, and Her Majesty did reconsider her intention. Her Majesty surveyed the condition of her kingdom and of her empire with that comprehensive and perfectly impartial spirit, which all who have served Her Majesty know that she ever exercises. And it was under these circumstances, having reconsidered the position of public affairs, that Her Majesty deigned to signify to Lord Derby that she deemed it was his duty to undertake the responsibility of their management

"Sir, we have endeavoured, in pursuance of the command of our sovereign, to administer the affairs of this mighty empire. That we have done so sedulously I presume to say; that we have conducted them not altogether without success I venture to believe. I know, sir, that when we acceded to office there was a great fear in the public mind that this country was not defended as became England; but we now know, sir, that the name of England carries due authority abroad, and that she can add to negotiation all that influence that results from the consciousness of power. I know that when we acceded to office there was great distress and depression in men's minds—a fear of increased taxation impending, and disappointment from the suspicion that engagements for the reduction of taxation would not be fulfilled. But, sir, the burdens on the public have not been increased, and the promises of reduction have been realized; and the state of our revenue is, in every sense, highly satisfactory. With regard to the more important branch of foreign affairs, I can say truly that although in that respect we had an inheritance of trouble, and probably during the period of our official existence we have had as many difficulties to deal with as could well fall to the lot of any ministry, although during the last three months the question of peace or war has sometimes appeared to tremble in the balance and to be only a matter of a moment, still we have so managed affairs that all immediate dangers appear to have vanished. There is now a prospect of arrangement, which, if concluded, will lead to the establishment of undoubted and enduring peace.

"I touch, sir, on principal topics; doubtless there are others, and of importance, but I will not dilate on them now. We have, I think, introduced measures calculated to make law reform not merely a mockery and a by-word. If we are indebted for the pacification of India to the wisdom of our rulers and the valour of our chiefs, at least it must be acknowledged that this adminis-

tration did support and promote the success and heroism of those men by sending out to them, under great stress and difficulties, those supplies of valiant soldiers and those munitions that led to the triumphs they achieved. The noble lord has talked, as he always talks, of a dissolution of the present parliament. These are words that cannot escape my lips, and I must, with the permission of the House, refrain from touching upon that theme; but I may be allowed to say, in answer to the noble lord, that if in the course of time the present servants of the queen find themselves upon the hustings before their constituents, I for one have that confidence in a great and generous nation that I believe that in that eventful hour they will not forget the difficulties under which we undertook the administration of affairs, nor perhaps, sir, be altogether unmindful of what, under those difficulties, we have accomplished for their welfare. It is the conviction we entertain of the justice of the people of England—it is because we believe in the power of public opinion—that we have been sustained in this House during our long and anxious struggle, and are still sustained, even at this moment, amid all the manoeuvres of parliamentary intrigue and all the machinations of party warfare.”

At the conclusion of the speech the House divided, and amid great excitement, for the result had been by no means assured, ministers found themselves in a minority; for the second reading of the bill 291, against it, 330—majority, 39. Thus it will be seen that the almost unequalled number of 621 members was present and voted on this division.

Of the two courses before them, ministers preferred the dissolution of parliament to the resignation of their offices. The grounds on which the government appealed to the country were well stated by Mr. Disraeli in the address he issued to his constituents:—

“GENTLEMEN—A parliamentary majority, composed of discordant sections, has availed itself of its numerical strength to embarrass Her Majesty’s

government, and by a disingenuous manoeuvre, to intercept the discussion of their measures.

“A year ago Lord Derby was summoned by Her Majesty to undertake the administration of public affairs. Assisted by his colleagues, he has with diligence and devotion endeavoured to discharge his duty to the country.

“The blow which has lately been inflicted on the government deprives it of authority; and yet in the ranks of the Opposition there is no more unity of sentiment than when their distracted politics rendered it necessary that Lord Derby should assume the helm.

“The Opposition in the present House of Commons, which was elected under ambiguous circumstances, is broken into sections, which can always combine and overthrow the queen’s government, however formed. This is a condition alike prejudicial to parliament and to the empire.

“It is for the country to comprehend and to remedy these evils.

“The moment is critical. England has engaged to mediate between two great monarchs, and if possible, preserve for Europe the blessings of peace. It is necessary that the queen’s government should be supported by a patriotic parliament.

“Her Majesty, therefore, under the advice of her ministers, will shortly prorogue the present parliament with a view to its immediate dissolution, and will recur to the sense of her people, so that those who may be intrusted with Her Majesty’s confidence may be enabled to conduct the government with becoming authority.

“I have the honour to be, gentlemen,

“Your obliged and faithful servant,

“B. DISRAELI

“DOWNING STREET, April 4, 1859.”

Parliament was prorogued April 19, 1859, and dissolved on the following day.

The state of foreign affairs to a certain extent favoured the fortunes of the Conservative party at the hustings. War had now broken out between France and Austria concerning the cause of Italian independence. Ever since the disastrous events of 1848–49, terminating in the battle of Novara fatal to the Sardinians, the relations between Piedmont and Austria had been of an unfriendly character; and the undisguised sympathy professed by the government of Victor Emanuel for the cause of Italian independence in the north of Italy, or in other words, the throwing off of the Austrian yoke, at last led to the withdrawal

of the Austrian minister from Turin. The war that followed is one difficult to justify. Lombardy was secured to Austria by the settlement of 1815, and she held it by as good a title as that by which Sardinia herself held the territory of Genoa. Unfortunately, however, Austria had not confined herself in Italy to the legitimate exercise of the rights confirmed to her by the congress at Vienna. Her influence had extended to the duchies of Tuscany, Modena, and Parma; her troops occupied the Legations; and even at Naples her authority was predominant. It was this domineering interference that crushed the spirit of Italian independence and induced the Emperor of the French, who was always anxious to divert the attention of Paris from his dynasty to foreign complications, to aid Sardinia in her attempt to relieve the peninsula from the despotism of an alien and hated race. At the instance of Austria, Count Cavour refused to disarm, and the advanced posts of the Austrian army crossed the Ticino. The passage of the Ticino was regarded by the Emperor of the French as a declaration of war against France, and hostilities began—Sardinia and France once more fighting side by side. In the war that ensued, the sympathy of England was wholly on the side of Italian independence. It was known that Lord Palmerston was hostile to Austria, and therefore, personally, his policy was popular; but the Conservative policy, as interpreted by Mr. Disraeli, was in favour of maintaining neutrality during the struggle; and the nation having had enough of war, preferred to crush its sympathies for the sake of peace. Therefore at the hustings it was feared that if Lord Palmerston was returned to parliament with a large majority, England would again be plunged into the horrors of war, whilst with a Conservative majority there was no probability of such an alternative; hence, many an elector, though he favoured the cause for which France and Sardinia were fighting, gave his vote to a Conservative in order not to be drawn into

the struggle. However much the people sympathized with the cause of Italian independence, they were not prepared to purchase it at the expense of English blood and English money. The views entertained by Mr. Disraeli on the subject were those of a vigilant neutrality. He did not wish to go to war against Austria—it was not his business to meddle with Italian independence; but he was prepared for war should the necessity arise.

"A war in Italy," he said, "is not a war in a corner. An Italian war may by possibility be a European war. The waters of the Adriatic cannot be disturbed without agitating the waters of the Rhine. The port of Trieste is not a mere Italian port; it is a port which belongs to the German Confederation, and an attack on Trieste is not an attack on Austria alone, but also on Germany. If war springs up beyond the precincts of Italy, England has interests not merely from those principles, those enlightened principles of civilization, which make her look with an adverse eye to aught which would disturb the peace of the world; but England may be interested from material considerations of the most urgent and momentous character."

During the elections the Conservatives had made a clear gain of twenty-nine seats; but this accession of strength, it became at once evident, was not sufficient to defeat the tactics of the Liberal majority. The fate of the government was soon decided. Shortly after the reassembling of parliament the Marquis of Hartington moved an amendment to the address expressive of a want of confidence in the government. With amusing candour he frankly stated that the move was a party one, and that the Liberals were in a state of division. Mr. Disraeli followed after the seconder of the amendment. He found no fault, he remarked (June 7, 1859), with the course taken by the Opposition, as it was of great advantage that the government should be informed whether it possessed the confidence of parliament or not. Still he was desirous of

knowing what ministers had done to inspire distrust. He then criticised the reckless assertions of Sir James Graham at Carlisle, who had alleged that the publicans had been bribed by the government; that Lord Derby had subscribed largely to a fund to manage the elections; that a compact had been entered into with the Pope in order to secure the Irish vote; and other accusations equally inaccurate but equally offensive. So venomous and unfounded were these charges, that Mr. Disraeli pretended, when first he read them, that he had attributed them to the lips of youth—to the young man whom Sir James had then been anxious to introduce into public life.

"When I read that charge upon the ministry," said Mr. Disraeli, amid the loud laughter of the House, "which, I was told, was to be the basis of a vote of want of confidence, and which was made without the slightest foundation and with a bitterness which seemed to me to be perfectly gratuitous, I naturally said, 'Young men will be young men.' Youth will be, as we all know, somewhat reckless in assertion; and when we are juvenile and curly, one takes a pride in sarcasm and invective. One feels some interest in a young relative of a distinguished member of this House; and although the statements were not very agreeable to Her Majesty's ministers, I felt that he was a chip of the old block. I felt—and I hope my colleagues shared in the sentiment—that when that young gentleman entered this House, he might, when gazing upon the venerable form and listening to the accents of benignant wisdom that fell, and always fall, from the right hon. gentleman the member for Carlisle, he might learn how reckless assertion in time might mature into accuracy of statement, and how bitterness and invective, however organic, can be controlled by the vicissitudes of a wise experience. . . . The public have really believed that a corrupt administration has been obtaining returns from the hustings by the vilest means, and for the most infamous

purposes. They have believed that the allowance to innkeepers for the billeting of soldiers was absolutely increased at the arbitrary wish of a war minister in order to bribe the publicans to vote for government candidates, though every honourable gentleman in this House must be perfectly aware that their predecessors had passed the Act by which that increase of allowance was constitutionally made, and that the Act had been for some time in operation. The public did believe that barracks were built and contracts given when contracts were never entered into, and barracks were never built. More than that, the public really did believe that my Lord Derby had subscribed £20,000 to a fund to manage the elections. The Earl of Derby has treated that assertion quoted by the right hon. gentleman with silent contempt. All the other assertions made at the time have been answered in detail, and therefore I suppose he thought the time might come when, the subject being fairly before the House, he could leave it to me to say for him what I do say now, that the statement was an impudent fabrication. But what are all these contracts with innkeepers to the compact with the Pope? Next to nothing. Sir, it is not an agreeable duty to have to listen until parliament meets to statements made by privy councillors, by men who have filled the highest offices of the state, and who for aught I know may be about to fill high offices of state, but upon which, the moment parliament meets, every one is silent. Neither the mover nor the seconder of this great indictment of want of confidence condescends even to mention them. And yet the charge is a weighty one."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the charge, that the diplomatic negotiations to prevent war between France and Austria had failed. Were the Conservatives, he asked, singular in that respect? How about the negotiations which had preceded the Crimean war? Had not the cabinet which possessed such men as Lord Aber-

deen, Lord Clarendon, Lord Palmerston, and Lord John Russell—the cabinet of “all the talents”—failed in negotiation? Yet that cabinet had possessed every advantage; it was filled by experienced statesmen, it had a parliamentary majority, and it had a patriotic Opposition. “You had,” sneered Mr. Disraeli, “an Opposition numerous and fairly ambitious; but in the midst of your negotiations that Opposition did not bring forward votes of want of confidence, nor propose cunning resolutions to embarrass the public service. We aided you in your difficulties, and supported you heartily and truly. Is there any one can murmur ‘No’? I defy any man to bring an instance during that war in which we brought forward a single motion to embarrass you; and when by your general misgovernment and misconduct of the war there arose a public outcry which called for your fall, it was a member on your own side of the House who struck the blow, and it was by the votes of several members of the Liberal party that you were ejected from office. . . . I hardly know who are our rivals; still less do I know who are to be our successors. If it is the noble lord (Lord Palmerston) and his friends, I might contrast his policy with ours, his failures with ours, and make out a case upon which the House might adjudicate. But then the noble lord—who lives not in the good old days of constitutional rivalry, but in the days of reconciled sections—will tell the House, ‘You cannot judge of my resources by the gentlemen who are sitting near me; others will come to my aid, and by their unquestioned abilities and their varied experience, and with the bright evidence of their triumphant careers, I shall form an administration which will put you out as the glorious sun does a farthing rushlight, and the whole country will immediately see that they have a strong government entitled to their confidence.’”

The next charge against the government, proceeded the chancellor of the

exchequer, was that because they had failed in the question of parliamentary reform, therefore they were not entitled to deal again with the subject, which they undoubtedly would do if continued in office. This gave Mr. Disraeli an opportunity of launching forth against Lord John Russell, who sat, all smiles, below the gangway.

“There were great objections,” said Mr. Disraeli alluding to his bill, “to details, but still details no doubt of importance, urged against that measure. It was said, for instance, that it would disfranchise county freeholders living in towns, that it would enable votes to be given by papers, and other objections were made to it. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that these propositions perfectly deserved the condemnation they received, have no propositions to amend the representation of the people been coupled and connected with propositions which were equally unsuccessful and equally condemned? Why don’t we hear of them? Why are we always told of our unhappy proposal to disfranchise freeholders and to give votes by papers? The noble lord the member for the city has been in office almost all his life; he has had a monopoly of this question of reform; he has been handling it and fumbling it as long as I can remember. What, then, has he done? He has twice brought forward reform bills, and twice unsuccessfully. He proposed at one time—he, the great patron of the working classes—to disfranchise all the freemen in England. Why should not that proposition be urged as a reason for no longer intrusting him with the preparation of a reform bill? In one bill he introduced a proposition hostile to the very principle on which representative government is founded, and alien to the spirit of the constitution—representation by minorities. If there ever was a proposition received with universal condemnation, that was it. Why should not that disqualify the noble lord from meddling again with the sacred

question of reform? The noble lord, who cannot for a moment tolerate government by a minority, within my memory sat on these benches, and led this House as prime minister, in an avowed minority, resting entirely on the counsel and the support which he received from Sir R. Peel.* The noble lord, who is so constant in his denunciations of government by a minority, himself proposed to change the English constitution, and give representation to minorities at the hustings. I suppose he is the only person who can be intrusted with the preparation of a reform bill, because the other noble lord, the member for Tiverton, does not like the subject at all. It is one to which he does not conceal his disinclination. We, who at least have prepared and introduced a measure which would more than have doubled the constituency of the kingdom, are never to be allowed to give our opinions on a measure of this kind, while the noble lord, who scarcely conceals his opinion that all parliamentary reform is a bad thing, and who tells you that if you are to have it you shall have as little as possible, is the popular candidate for the command of what we were told yesterday are now 'the united sections of the Liberal party.' I congratulate the honourable member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright) on the lamb-like manner in which he abdicated those portentous opinions which a while ago frightened the island from its propriety."

The debate lasted three nights, though Mr. Disraeli was anxious for the House to divide on the first night. It was not till the 10th of June that members went into the lobby, and gave their names to the clerks. On a division the numbers were 323 for the amendment, 310 against it; majority for the government, 13.

Upon this defeat the Conservatives resigned. On the failure of Lord Granville to form an administration owing to the refusal of Lord John Russell to serve under

him, Lord Palmerston was sent for by Her Majesty, and the following government was framed. We give only its more prominent members:—

First Lord of the Treasury, .	Viscount Palmerston.
Lord Chancellor,	Lord Campbell.
Lord President of the Council,	Earl Granville.
Lord Privy Seal,	Duke of Argyle.
Chancellor of the Exchequer, {	Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.
Home Secretary,	Sir G. C. Lewis.
Foreign Secretary, . . .	Lord J. Russell.
Colonial Secretary, . . .	Duke of Newcastle.
War Secretary,	{ Right Hon. Sidney Herbert.
Indian Secretary,	Sir C. Wood.
Chancellor of the Duchy of {	Sir G. Grey.
Lancaster,	
Postmaster-General, . . .	Earl of Elgin.
First Lord of the Admiralty,	Duke of Somerset.
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland,	Earl of Carlisle.
Chief Secretary for Ireland,	Mr. Cardwell.

The Board of Trade was offered to Mr. Cobden, but declined; upon his refusal the post was filled by Mr. Milner Gibson. It is worthy of notice that between the June of 1846 and the July of 1859 no less than six changes of ministry had occurred.

Mr. Disraeli was not one of those leaders who, in the hour of defeat, abandon all hopes of future success, and by placidly resigning themselves to failure damp the ardour of their followers. He still believed in the fortunes of the Conservative party, and if that party were only patient and united a great future, he declared, was open before them. Speaking at a dinner given to the late ministry at Merchant Taylors' Hall he alluded to the subject. Since the reform bill the Tory leaders had been four times recalled to office; and though their rule had been brief, Conservatism had gained in sympathy and influence throughout the country. "The Conservative party," said Mr. Disraeli (July 16, 1859), "is now a great confederation, prepared to assist progress and to resist revolution. We have arrived at this commanding position at the very moment when it has devolved upon us to abandon power; but there is no inconsistency in the situation if we examine

* See the history of the Russell government, formed in 1846, as stated in this work.

the past. We have seceded from office because of the powerful machinery which was devised in 1832 to prevent us from gaining office, but we did so unquestionably with public respect. We relinquished office with the confidence and approbation of the country. That is capable of satisfactory demonstration, and this is the proof—that those who ejected us from power have laid down no good ground why that expulsion should have taken place. . . . We must remember that when we have to deal with the constitution of an old European country, we are not like men who fashion commonwealths in a wilderness. We have to consider prescriptive rights, habitual influences, and all that complication of opinion, sentiment, and prejudice which exists and can exist only in a community whose institutions are consecrated by custom. It is this reverence for tradition which makes this ancient and free country in which we live shrink from empirical and unnecessary change, and which makes our statesmen hesitate to alter even to improve. . . . I can truly say that, from the earliest moment when I gave my attention to public affairs, I have ever had it as one of my main objects to restore the power and repute of the great party to which we are proud to belong, and which I believe to be intimately bound up with the welfare and renown of this country. My connection with that party has existed in days of trial and comparative adversity, but I have never ceased to have faith in its destinies, because I believed it was founded on principles to which the great body of the nation responded. In attempting, however humbly, to regulate its fortunes, I have always striven to distinguish that which was eternal from that which was but accidental in its opinions. I have always striven to assist in building it upon a broad and national basis, because I believed it to be a party peculiarly and essentially national—a party which adhered to the institutions of the country as embodying the national necessities and forming the best security for the

liberty, the power, and the prosperity of England.”

The history of the remainder of this session can be briefly sketched. The Liberals were divided among themselves, and they had no policy. In domestic matters they promised reform, but it was known that Lord Palmerston was not eager for the settlement of the question; and in foreign affairs the prime minister had openly stated, “The course which we intend to pursue is that which has been chalked out for us by those who preceded us—a strict neutrality in the contest which is now waging.” Happily the contest was not of long duration. Austria worsted throughout—at Montebello, at Palestro, at Magenta, at Marignano, and at Solferino—was only too pleased to come to terms with her adversaries and to agree to the preliminaries of peace signed at Villafranca. The terms of this treaty, afterwards extended and confirmed at Zurich, were as follows:—The Emperor of Austria and the Emperor of the French were to favour the creation of an Italian confederation, which was to be under the honorary presidency of the Pope. Austria was to cede to France her rights over Lombardy, with the exception of the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera. The ceded territory was to be presented to Sardinia. Venetia was to form part of the Italian confederation, remaining, however, subject to Austria. The Grand-duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Modena were to return to their states. Both France and Austria were to request the Holy Father to introduce into his states some indispensable reform; and complete amnesty was to be granted to all persons compromised on the occasion of the recent events in the territories of the belligerents. France subsequently had her reward in the annexation of Savoy and Nice.

Throughout this session Mr. Disraeli was a vigilant critic of the actions of the government, and the voice of the leader of the Opposition made itself frequently heard in the popular chamber. Mr. Gladstone introduced his budget (July 18, 1859), and the

financial statement gave rise to the usual amount of adverse and favourable comments. The chancellor of the exchequer estimated the revenue for the coming year at £64,340,000, and the expenditure at £69,207,000; for the army the expense would be £13,300,000, and for the navy, £12,782,000. The deficiency of £4,867,000 he proposed to make up by adding 4*d.* to the tax on incomes above £150, which would produce £4,000,000 (the whole amount to be exacted on the payment of the first half year), and diminishing the malt credits from eighteen to twelve weeks, which would give £780,000. Maltsters had hitherto been allowed to take credit of eighteen weeks in the payment of their excise duty; thus, by this plan a considerable portion of the revenue of 1860-61 was brought into the treasury before the end of the financial year 1859-60. To this arrangement Mr. Disraeli made some objections.

After a careful defence of his own financial arrangements, the leader of the Opposition expressed it as his opinion that Mr. Gladstone was right in increasing the income tax rather than to resort to borrowing; he, however, objected to the mode of collecting the additional income tax, and insisted that the levy of the special tax in six months instead of a year would be a great injury. All the desired results could be obtained by spreading the collection over a year, and obtaining the accommodation required from the bank. Still the country could not go on raising £70,000,000 a year, and it was most necessary to enforce economy. They could not reduce the three great sources of civil expenditure—the administration of justice, the education, and the health of the people; to make war upon those estimates was really to make war upon civilization. They must reduce their naval and military estimates in common with other powers. The moment had arrived to introduce into Europe the question of economy. The treaty of Villafranca had been signed, and there was a talk of a congress or a conference

to be attended by the neutral powers. He advised England to stay away from the conference, for she had been neutral throughout the late struggle; but the moment she attended the conference she would cease to be neutral, and might be led into engagements which would involve her in proceedings injurious to her resources and certain to produce only ruin and confusion. He advised her instead to appeal to the Emperor of the French.

"Do not go to congresses and conferences," he said, "in fine dresses and ribands, to enjoy the petty vanity of settling the fate of petty princes. No; but go to your ally the Emperor of the French; give him credit for the motives which have animated and influenced him, and say, 'If you are in favour of peace—if at a great hazard to the mere reputation of the hour you have terminated this war, join with us in securing that peace by the only mode in which peace can be secured. Revive and restore, and even increase the good feeling which once existed, which I hope still exists, between the great countries of England and France; prove by the diminution of your armaments that you are sincerely anxious, as we believe you are, for the peace of Europe and of the world, and we will join you in a spirit of reciprocal confidence, and animating alike the industry of both nations, thus achieve conquests far more valuable than Lombardy, far more valuable than those wild dreams of a regeneration ever promised, but never accomplished.' . . . Instead of going to congresses and conferences for petty objects in which England has no interest, and which may involve England in great disaster, let the noble lord at the head of the government prove to the world that England is a power that possesses and exercises a great influence, especially with France, by accomplishing that which is much more important than formal articles of peace; by bringing about that which will put an end for ever to the doubts on the sincerity of princes; which will speak to every cabin

and cottage in both countries, as well as to the houses of parliament and places of high resort; which will prove to the natural conviction of the great countries of Europe that peace is the policy of their rulers. Let us terminate this disastrous system of rival expenditure and mutually agree, with no hypocrisy, but in a manner and under circumstances that can admit of no doubt—by a reduction of armaments—that peace is really our policy. Then, sir, the right hon. gentleman the chancellor of the exchequer may look forward with no apprehension to his next budget, and England may then actually witness the termination of the income tax.”

A few evenings after he had expressed these opinions Mr. Disraeli again alluded to the subject. It was proposed that an English representative should be sent to the conference at Zurich, to consider the terms of the Villafranca treaty. Mr. Disraeli strongly objected to such a proceeding. “If under all circumstances,” he said, “we should be chary about the engagements which conferences and congresses always lead to, surely when a war has been waged of which we entirely disapproved, when it has been closed on a sudden, when the responsibility of all that has occurred and of all that may occur is one of which this government is completely clear, it would be the height of rashness and precipitation by any act or any advice of ours to involve ourselves in the responsibility of a settlement occasioned by a war for which we are not answerable. I trust, therefore, that the feeling of the House will be so direct and distinct upon this subject, that Her Majesty’s ministers will not feel it their duty to recommend Her Majesty to send any representative to this projected conference. . . . We had nothing to do with the war; we had nothing to do with the peace; and if difficulties arise in which we must interfere, we shall interfere with much greater effect and with much greater dignity, if we do not do so merely to save other persons from difficulties which they created and for which we are not answerable.”

Parliament was prorogued August 13, 1859, and ministers had not then made up their minds whether they should attend the peace conference or no. In the speech from the throne the lord chancellor said, “Her Majesty has not yet received the information necessary to enable her to decide whether she may think fit to take part in any such negotiation.”

During the autumn, and until the opening of parliament, Mr. Disraeli was silent, save on local matters devoid of political interest.

The Palmerston programme at the assembling of the legislature was, as usual, a full and ambitious one. The government had decided to send a representative to attend the congress at Zurich. A commercial treaty had been entered into between England and France; war in conjunction with France was being waged with China, to redress the infractions of the treaty of Tien Tsin; a treaty had been concluded with Japan; the volunteer system was to be encouraged; a reform bill was to be introduced, and measures were to be considered for the improvement of the laws relating to bankruptcy and the transfer of land; also for the consolidation of the statutes, and a further fusion of law and equity. Mr. Disraeli reviewed the position of affairs in his speech on the address (January 4, 1860). The first topic which engaged his attention was the commercial treaty with France, which Mr. Cobden had conducted to a successful issue. He wished to know, said the leader of the Opposition, what was to be their business as a House of Commons in examining that commercial treaty. Were they to be called upon to decide whether the terms of the bargain were advantageous or adequate? If they did that, they must admit that the principle of reciprocity was the principle which to guide them in their decision. But to admit the principle of reciprocity was to shake to its centre the new commercial system which had of late years been established in the country. If the

principle of reciprocity was not to be acknowledged in the present instance, he wanted to know why they should not have increased their commercial relations with France, without at the same time asking an equivalent? It was said the country was indebted for the prospect of increased commercial relations with France to Mr. Cobden; but he felt sure that Mr. Cobden was the last person who would ever have counselled the adoption of a commercial treaty founded on the principle of reciprocity. There had been no necessity for the treaty, for the Emperor of the French had declared four years ago that it was his intention in 1861 to abolish the prohibitive system.*

"What then," asked Mr. Disraeli, "is it you expect to gain by a treaty? All you can do to encourage an increased commercial exchange with France, you can do

at once by reducing your own duties, without placing on this table a document you may find very awkward and embarrassing hereafter, and raising claims for reciprocity from other quarters opposed to the commercial system you have now so long and so successfully been carrying into practice. On these two points I think the House has a right to ask some explanations from Her Majesty's government; we have a right to ask why they have negotiated a treaty with France on the principle of reciprocity, which has been absolutely rejected in our own commercial system? Why have they ostensibly endeavoured to obtain a result which must have inevitably occurred at the very period the treaty stipulates for? Why have they engaged us by treaty for what must have been done without any treaty whatever? These are points, in my opinion, which call for explanation."

* The commercial treaty was an arrangement between the Emperor of the French and Mr. Cobden. France was and, as we have recently seen, is in favour of protection. The Emperor Napoleon was a free-trader, and signed the agreement by his own imperial will, and not by the sanction of the nation. Now that France has no emperor, she is anxious to discontinue the treaty, and to adopt a stringent policy of protection. The commercial treaty was signed Jan. 23, 1860. The two most important clauses are the first and the fifth.

I. His Majesty the Emperor of the French engages that on the following articles of British production and manufacture, imported from the United Kingdom into France, the duties shall in no case exceed thirty per cent. *ad valorem*, the two additional decimes included. The articles are as follows:—

Refined sugar; turmeric in powder; rock crystal worked; iron forged in lumps or prisms; brass wire (copper alloyed with zinc), polished or unpolished, of every description; chemical productions, enumerated or non-enumerated; extracts of dye-woods; garancine; common soap of every description, and perfumed soap; stone-ware and earthenware, fine and common; china and porcelain ware; glass, crystal, mirrors, and plate-glass; cotton yarn; worsted and woollen yarn of every description; yarns of flax and hemp; yarns of hair, enumerated or non-enumerated; cotton manufactures; horse-hair manufactures, enumerated or non-enumerated; worsted and woollen manufactures, enumerated or non-enumerated; cloth list; manufactures of hair; silk manufactures; manufactures of waste and floss silk; manufactures of bark and all other vegetable fibres, enumerated or non-enumerated; manufactures of flax and hemp; mixed manufactures of every description; hosiery, haberdashery, and small wares; manufactures of caoutchouc and gutta-percha, pure or mixed; articles of clothing, wholly or in part made up; prepared skins; articles of every sort manufactured from leather or skins, included or not under the denomination of small wares, fine or common; plated articles of every description; cutlery; metal wares, whether enumerated or not; pig and cast iron of every description, without distinction of weight; bar and wrought iron, with the exception of certain kinds; steel; machinery, tools, and mechanical instruments of every description; carriages on springs, lined

and painted; cabinet ware, carved work, and turnery of every description; worked ivory and wood; brandies and spirits, including those not distilled from wine, cherries, molasses, or rice; ships and boats. With respect to refined sugar and chemical productions of which salt is the basis, the excise of inland duties shall be added to the amount of the above specified duties.

V. Her Britannic Majesty engages to recommend to parliament to enable her to abolish the duties of importation on the following articles:—

Sulphuric acid, and other mineral acids; agates and carnelians, set; lucifers of every description; percussion caps; arms of every description; jewels, set; toys; corks; brocade of gold and silver; embroideries and needlework of every description; brass and bronze manufactures, and bronzed metal; canes, walking-canes or sticks, umbrella or parasol sticks, mounted, painted, or otherwise ornamented; hats, of whatever substance they may be made; gloves, stockings, socks, and other articles of cotton or linen, wholly or in part made up; leather manufactures; lace, manufactured of cotton, wool, silk, or linen; manufactures of iron and steel; machinery and mechanical instruments; tools and other instruments; cutlery, and other articles of steel, iron, or cast-iron; fancy ornaments of steel and iron; articles covered with copper by galvanic process; millinery and artificial flowers; raw fruits; gloves, and other leather articles of clothing; manufactures of caoutchouc and gutta-percha; oils; musical instruments; worsted and woollen shawls, plain, printed, or patterned; coverlids, woollen gloves, and other worsted and woollen manufactures not enumerated; handkerchiefs, and other manufactures not enumerated of linen and hemp; perfumery; cabinet ware, carved work, and turnery of every description; clocks, watches, and opera-glasses; manufactures of lead, enumerated or not enumerated; feathers, dressed or not; goats' and other hair manufactures; china and porcelain ware; stone and earthen ware; grapes; sulphate of quinine; salts of morphine; manufactures of silk, or of silk mixed with any other materials, of whatever description they may be.

The remaining clauses may be briefly condensed thus:—Great Britain to propose the reduction of the duties on the importation of French wine to a rate not exceeding 8s. a

Mr. Disraeli, after praising the courage of the troops engaged in the Chinese war, then criticised the condition of Italy and the relations of the English government to that country. He wished to know what had induced the government to attend the congress. The affairs of Italy did not concern English interests, and a policy of non-interference ought to be adopted. The late government had resolved not to meddle with Italian matters, and both the country and the House had approved of their policy. "There is no doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, laying down the foreign policy he afterwards so brilliantly enforced, "that the House was opposed to our going into the congress, and that it was in favour of that policy which is popularly known by the name of the policy of non-interference. I say popularly known by that name, because I do not know any member of this House—either among my colleagues or among those who sit on the other side of the House—who has ever maintained the monstrous proposition that England ought never, under any circumstances, to interfere in the affairs of foreign states. There are conditions under which it may be our imperative duty to interfere. We may clearly interfere in the affairs of foreign countries when the interests or the honour of England are at stake, or when in our opinion the independence of Europe is menaced. But a great responsibility devolves upon that minister who has to decide when those conditions have

arisen, and he who makes a mistake upon that subject; he who involves his country in interference or in war under the idea that the interests or honour of the country are concerned, when neither is substantially involved; he who involves his country in interference or war because he believes the independence of Europe is menaced, when, in fact, the independence of Europe is not in danger—makes, of course, a great, a fatal mistake. The general principle that we ought not to interfere in the affairs of foreign nations, unless there is a clear necessity, and that, generally speaking, it ought to be held a political dogma that the people of other countries should settle their own affairs without the introduction of foreign influence or foreign power, is one which, I think, the House does not only accept, but, I trust, will cordially adhere to. That was the policy which the late government maintained six months ago, when there was some wavering in the faith of that policy, and some person high in authority spoke of the possibility of England being humiliated by not taking what is called a leading part in the settlement of foreign questions. I ask those who then wavered, or who indulged in such observations, to contrast the position of England now, when after six months we still have to acknowledge the blessings of non-interference in the affairs of our neighbours, notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to interfere, and to which I shall presently refer—I ask them to con-

gallon. Merchandise imported from France to be admitted into Great Britain at a rate of duty equal to the excise duty imposed on articles of the same description in the United Kingdom. Brandies and spirits imported from France to be admitted into the United Kingdom at a duty equal to the excise duty levied on home-made spirits, with the addition of a surtax of 2*d.* a gallon. Rum and tafia imported from the French colonies to be also admitted at the same rate of duty as levied on the same articles imported from the British colonies. Gold and silver plate imported from France to be admitted at a duty equal to the excise duty charged on British gold and silver plate. Should either of the contracting parties establish an excise duty or inland tax upon any article of home production comprised among the preceding articles, the foreign imported article of the same description to be liable to an equivalent duty on importation. Neither of the contracting parties to prohibit the exportation of coal or to levy duty upon such exportation. The rights of property in trade marks and in patterns of every description to be reciprocally enjoyed by the subjects of either nation in the

dominions of the other. The *ad valorem* duties to be afterwards converted into specific duties by a supplementary convention. (This convention was afterwards changed into three separate conventions). Great Britain reserves to herself, upon special grounds, during a period not exceeding two years, half of the duty on those articles, the free admission of which is stipulated by the present treaty—the reserve, however, not applying to articles of silk manufacture. The *ad valorem* duties payable on the importation into France of merchandise of British production and manufacture not to exceed a maximum of 25 per cent. The treaty to be binding for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and for Algeria; it shall also remain in force for the space of ten years, and in case no notification be made by either of the powers, a year before the expiration of the said ten years, of their intention to put an end to the treaty, it shall continue in force another year, and so on from year to year. An additional article, dated February 25, raised the surtax on French brandies and spirits imported into the United Kingdom to 5*d.*

trast the position of England with that of any other country in the world. Has not the adhesion to the policy of non-interference by England been most beneficial? Has there ever been a period when England has occupied a prouder or more powerful position than that which she at present fills? As, therefore, she has attained that position while adhering to the policy of non-interference, I trust that the House of Commons, which, on the last night of the session, clearly expressed its opinion in favour of that policy, will, at the commencement of the present session, take this opportunity of asking explanations of Her Majesty's government, or in other words, will show to Her Majesty's government that if they continue in that policy they will receive the support of the House; but that, if they diverge from it, they must offer to the House reasons far greater than any that have yet reached my ear, and arguments of more weighty import than I believe will be introduced into this debate."

He had been told, continued the leader of the Opposition, that during the autumn overtures had been made to the French government, by Lord John Russell, to enter into a special agreement for the settlement of Italian affairs. What was the nature of those overtures? He was opposed to the congress, and to any interference with Italy. She was not in a condition to be served by diplomacy. "The moral I draw," said Mr. Disraeli in conclusion, "is, that a country in that state is in a condition far beyond the management and settlement of courts and cabinets and congresses. National independence is not created by protocols, nor public liberty guaranteed by treaties. All such arrangements have been tried before, and the consequence has been a sickly and short-lived offspring. What is going on in Italy—never mind whose may have been the original fault, what the present errors—what is going on in Italy can only be solved by the will, the energy, the sentiment and the thought of the population themselves."

Lord Palmerston briefly replied. The commercial treaty, he said, was an exceptional arrangement, and did not imply any change in opinion on the principle which should govern those matters. With regard to Italy the government had made no overtures to France; and England entered the congress perfectly free to decide upon what course she thought best. Of one thing the country could be assured, that no foreign force would be exerted to control the Italian people in the management of their own affairs. Italy was to settle her own questions in her own way, but the powers would advise her how to act; she might accept or reject such advice as she pleased.

The most exciting feature in the session was the budget. The year 1860, it had been said, was to be a memorable one in the history of finance; the war duties on tea and sugar were to be lessened, the period for which the income tax was voted had expired, and the new commercial treaty with France was to be introduced. The country was most anxious to hear how Mr. Gladstone would deal with these alterations, and what additional taxation he would suggest; nor was this anxiety lessened by the fact that the financial statement was postponed a few days owing to the ill-health of the chancellor of the exchequer. However, on February 10, 1860, Mr. Gladstone had sufficiently recovered to be enabled to lay before a crowded House the balance-sheet of the nation. The speech he delivered on that occasion was one of the most careful and elaborate of his famous budget orations, and well deserves perusal even at the present day, when the interest in most of its details has died out. We shall content ourselves with but a brief summary of the statement he made. The balance was against us. The war with China rendered a supplementary estimate of £850,000 necessary. Owing to the commercial treaty with France import duties would have to be remitted, which would create a loss to the revenue of £1,190,000. Then certain duties

—notably the paper duty—were to be reduced, which would entail a loss of some £2,000,000. The expenditure for the year was estimated at £70,014,000, and the income at £60,700,000. To supply this deficiency the income tax, instead of being totally abolished as had been promised, was to be raised to tenpence in the pound; the tea and sugar duties were to be retained at the figure at which they had stood since the war; the hop and malt credits were again shortened, while the Exchange bills were to be renewed. The duties on wine and brandy were to be materially reduced.

The budget, as a whole, was generally approved of, but it led to much discussion. Upon the motion to go into committee on the Customs Act, Mr. Disraeli brought forward an amendment to the effect that the House should not go into such committee until an opportunity had presented itself for considering the commercial treaty. He desired such treaty to be laid before the House, so that members should fully consider its clauses before being inextricably bound by its terms. He was afraid that those who then might vote for the reduction or remission of duty would find themselves unable to oppose the commercial treaty, when placed before them, which carried their own reductions into effect. First let them consider the treaty, and then the budget. He recommended that the precedent of the treaty with France in 1786 should be followed. "Now let the House observe this," he said, "that in the exposition with which Mr. Pitt introduced that treaty of commerce with France in 1787, there was not the slightest allusion to the effect which that treaty would have on the revenue of the country, though its effect must have been considerable. There was not the slightest allusion to his great and comprehensive measures of fiscal and financial reform, although it was his purpose to submit to the committee upon that great bill the resolutions which had been passed in the committee on the commercial treaty. In March, Mr. Pitt intro-

duced his great measure of financial reform. And what did he do in April? Why, at the right time Mr. Pitt proposed his budget. And I ask the House now, why are we to be treated differently from the Commons in 1787? Why should we not have the commercial treaty, the comprehensive measure of financial reform, and then the budget, brought forward in their natural order and submitted to us in that manner, which would give us frequent and ample opportunities for that matured debate and that criticism which questions of such importance and of such complicated character demand?" He also objected to the appointment of Mr. Cobden as the secret agent of the government, and declared that the treaty would indicate the idiosyncrasy of the negotiator. The amendment was, however, negatived by a large majority.

Mr. Disraeli again criticised the budget, upon the motion of Mr. Du Cane against the re-imposition of the income tax at so high a rate. He said that the budget aimed at too much, and provided too little. Mr. Gladstone had under-estimated the deficiency in the exchequer, which would be further increased by the reductions which were proposed. He had no prejudice against a treaty with France; but he objected to the commercial treaty because, apart from the financial conditions involved, it was an injurious measure. "I don't think," he said, "there ever was a treaty drawn up apparently with less forethought or less knowledge of the circumstances with which the negotiators had to deal, which altogether contains so many arrangements injurious not only to the trade of England, but inferentially and ultimately to that of France, or which is better calculated to sow the seeds of discord and dissension between the two countries. . . . As regards commercial intercourse with France there is on this side of the House no political opposition to such a course, but on the contrary the greatest readiness to enter into arrangements for that object. But we object to the treaty

as a treaty not skilfully negotiated, and as one that occasions a considerable deficiency in our revenue—probably a much more considerable deficiency than the chancellor of the exchequer estimates.”

Though the doubling of the income tax, and the permission granted to confectioners to sell French wines, gave rise to much discussion, the feature in the budget which was regarded with the least favour was the repeal of the paper duty. “The duty on paper,” writes a recent historian, “was the last remnant of an ancient system of finance which pressed severely on journalism. The stamp duty was originally imposed with the object of checking the growth of seditious newspapers. It was reduced, increased, reduced again, and increased again, until in the early part of the century it stood at fourpence on each copy of a newspaper issued. In 1836 it was brought down to the penny, represented by the red stamp on every paper, which most of us can still remember. There was besides this a considerable duty—sixpence, or some such sum—on every advertisement in a newspaper. Finally, there was the heavy duty on the paper material itself. A journal, therefore, could not come into existence until it had made provision for all these factitious and unnecessary expenses. The consequence was that a newspaper was a costly thing.”

Still, in spite of the advantages that would arise from this step, the abolition of the duty was strongly disapproved of, and especially by the Conservative party. To repeal the paper duty and to double the income tax were, it was said, an inversion of the order of things. Such a repeal would sacrifice a large revenue whilst the community would derive little benefit, for the price of books and the circulation of literature were, it was stated, very little affected by the duty on paper. It was a flagrant abandonment of the principles of Sir Robert Peel. With a heavy income tax, and with tea and sugar war duties to remit, so harmless a tax as the

paper duty was absurd. Then the paper manufacturers and the proprietors of expensive journals, who had no wish to see the country flooded with cheap newspapers, opposed the repeal. So strong was the opposition, that though Mr. Gladstone was ultimately successful he carried his resolutions by dwindling majorities. The second reading was carried by a majority of fifty-three; the third reading by a majority of only nine. “Can you reconcile it to yourselves,” cried Mr. Disraeli, “to sacrifice, in the present financial condition of the country, a large branch of revenue which the trade interested—and that is an important consideration—does not want you to part with, and which the evidence before you proves is not a declining but an increasing revenue?” The peers somewhat unconstitutionally rejected the repeal, but Mr. Gladstone got over the difficulty by including in the following year all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, instead of dividing it into several bills. Thus it became a money bill, and outside the region of the criticism of the House of Lords.

The leader of the Opposition was now to have his “tit-for-tat” with the government upon the question of reform. On Thursday, March 1, 1860, Lord John Russell introduced his measure, which was entitled the Representation of the People Bill. The country was quite indifferent to the matter; it was much more interested in the annexation of Savoy and Nice by France; in the prospects of a French invasion, the latest scare invented; and in having to pay a heavy income tax. Even the House of Commons was barely full, and as indifferent as if the debate was about to turn upon the details of an Indian budget. The bill of Lord John was very simple. It proposed to introduce a £10 occupation franchise for the counties, and to reduce the borough franchise to £6. The law as to rating was to remain unchanged, but the payment of poor rates only, and not as formerly of assessed taxes

also, was to be made a condition of the vote. The bill also proposed to take one member from twenty-five boroughs which returned two members each; to give to the West Riding two additional seats, to the southern division of Lancashire two, and to each of the following counties or county divisions one; North Lancashire, Middlesex, West Kent, South Devon, South Stafford, North Riding, the port of Lindsay, South Essex, East Somerset, West Norfolk, West Cornwall, and North Essex; it suggested that Kensington and Chelsea should form a borough with two members; that Birkenhead, Staleybridge, and Barnsley should each have one member; and that Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds should each return one additional member. In case of places where there were three members, it advocated that the third member should represent the minority. It was also proposed to give a member to the University of London. Upon the second reading Mr. Disraeli rose to oppose the measure.

"Sir, I understand," he began (March 19, 1860), "that the promoters of this bill claim for it the merit of simplicity. Simplicity in the operations of nature is admirable, because there we see adequate means adapted to the end proposed, without complexity. But in matters of legislation simplicity is a quality of an ambiguous character; because if we find that the means are not adequate to the end, then it is not simplicity at which we arrive, but rather imperfection and incompleteness. Now, what is the end proposed by this bill? The end is, 'to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales.' Are the means adequate to that end? My first impression, when I took up this bill, was that it might have been drawn up four or five centuries ago. Except the land on which we tread, and masses of brick and mortar, I do not see any property referred to as a qualification for exercising the franchise, and that in a country where for more than a century the people have been doing nothing but

creating and accumulating various properties to an incalculable amount. The claims of intelligence, of acquirement, and education are not noticed. The bill, indeed, is of a mediæval character, but without any of the inspiration of the feudal system or any of the genius of the middle ages. It proposes to itself three principal objects, which I suppose I may consider three principles. It is to extend the suffrage in counties and boroughs, and to effect some redistribution of parliamentary seats."

He then proceeded to deal with the details of the bill. With reference to the borough franchise the government had been actuated, not as to the fitness of the recipients, but as to the number of persons they could enfranchise. The existing borough constituency of England was 440,000, to which number that bill would add 217,000—the addition consisting almost entirely of one homogeneous class. How would that new constituency act upon the old? In some boroughs the constituency would be trebled, in others doubled; and about one half of the boroughs would be under the influence of the new class about to be enfranchised.

"Let us now consider," continued Mr. Disraeli, "whether the particular class upon whom the noble lord is about to confer this great political power are a class who are incapable, or who are unlikely to exercise it. Are they a class who have shown no inclination to combine? Are they a class incapable of organization? Quite the reverse. If we look to the history of this country during the present century, we shall find that the aristocracy, or upper classes, have on several very startling occasions shown a great power of organization. I think it cannot be denied that the working classes, especially since the peace of 1815, have shown a remarkable talent for organization, and a power of discipline and combination inferior to none. The same, I believe, cannot be said of the middle classes. With the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League, I cannot recall at this

moment any great successful political organization of the middle classes; and living in an age when everything is known, we now know that that great confederation, which ultimately proved so triumphant, owed its success to a great and unforeseen calamity [the Irish famine], and was on the eve of dispersion and dissolution only a short time before that terrible event occurred. [Here Mr. Bright cheered ironically.] I can only say that my authority is one of the most eminent members of your own confederation. But the fortune of the League does not affect my argument, which is founded on the fact that the working classes have shown on various occasions, and for long continuous periods, powers of organization, discipline, and combination quite equal to those of the upper classes; but that the middle classes, with the exception of the Anti-Corn Law League, have not, in my memory, conducted any great political confederation to a successful issue. Then the class to which you are about to give this predominance is perfectly capable of organization; and from the days of the Luddites to the present period the tradition of frequently secret, but always well-disciplined organization, has been preserved among the working classes. It is said that the working classes are exceedingly intelligent and educated, and therefore likely to appreciate the possession of the franchise. But these are reasons why you should take care, in legislating on this subject, that you do not give them a predominance. What has been the object of our legislative labours for many years, but to put an end to a class legislation which was much complained of? But you are now proposing to establish a class legislation of a kind which may well be viewed with apprehension."

Mr. Disraeli then discussed Lord John Russell's proposal to reduce the county franchise. "The county franchise," he said, "as proposed in the bill, will greatly reduce the influence of the landed proprietors and of the landed interest in this country. I object to any such reduction, and I will

tell the honourable member, who seems alarmed or annoyed by that expression, why it is I so object. I look round upon Europe at the present moment, and I see no country of any importance in which political liberty can be said to exist. I attribute the creation and the maintenance of our liberties to the influence of the land, and to our tenure of land. In England there are large properties round which men can rally, and that, in my mind, forms the only security in an old European country against that centralized form of government which has prevailed, and must prevail in every European community where there is no such counterpoise. It is our tenure of land to which we are indebted for our public liberties, because it is the tenure of land which makes local government a fact in England, and which allows the great body of Englishmen to be ruled by traditionary influence and by habit, instead of being governed, as in other countries, by mere police. Well, sir, believing that the proposed reconstruction of the county franchise has a tendency to diminish the just and salutary influence of the land of this country, I highly object to the noble lord's plan." As to the redistribution of parliamentary seats, the bill went too far, or not far enough. Mr. Disraeli objected to the establishment of what he called cumulative members for places already represented, and he objected to minorities being represented; the only way a minority should be represented was by becoming a majority. The bill was a bad measure; still he was not prepared to reject it upon the second reading. He hoped, however, it would be withdrawn.

Mr. Disraeli again criticised the bill (June 4, 1860) on going into committee, when Lord John Russell announced his intention of withdrawing the Scotch and Irish reform bill, proceeding only with the measure for England. Lord John was so anxious that his bill should pass, that provided it only became law, he was willing for the House of Commons to propose any

franchise it pleased. He would accept anything, if the House would but agree to something that would shuffle such an impediment out of the course! Anything the House would settle would be accepted by the government! So much for the high policy which had destroyed a ministry and dissolved a parliament!

"This is a grave position," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli. "The noble lord has come forward to-night, not to make a mere ordinary observation on going into committee of supply, but to announce a policy in dealing with these measures which will startle the whole country. He has made an announcement which, in a constitutional, in a national point of view, is one of the gravest announcements ever made to parliament—namely, that we should reform the representation of England without any security that the representation of Ireland and Scotland shall be reformed. Such a proposition has never before been made to parliament by any minister. Is there anything urgent that we should pursue so unprecedented, so indecorous a course? On the contrary, the noble lord, even at this immense price, does not contemplate accomplishing the policy which he recommends. Whatever he has said respecting the working classes, he has no conviction of the absolute and imperial necessity of the measure which he originally brought forward; nor has he any conviction that if it were carried it would accomplish and fulfil its purpose. What does he tell us? 'If you do not like this, for God's sake propose something else, and I give you to understand that your proposition will be received by the government in a candid and fair spirit.' What does that mean? It means that the government have no settled policy whatever which they intend to carry out. Giving up Ireland, giving up Scotland, coming to the members for England and asking them to place themselves in the despicable position described, calling upon the House to legislate in this scrambling fashion—all this proves that

there is no conviction of the necessity of this measure, no confidence in its provisions. It shows that the noble lord, from the first, exercising a fatal influence—as I told him when I sat opposite to him, and he occupied these benches—exercising a sinister influence on the fortunes of his party and on his own reputation, was induced to recommend a policy in opposition which it is impossible for him to accomplish as a minister. It shows that the noble lord is hazarding the safety of the country, in order, not that he may realize a fair reputation, but that he may terminate the question in a manner in no way dignified and which is hardly respectable, by recognizing that in opposition he was tempted to pursue an unwise, immature, and, I will now say, even a factious policy."

It soon became evident that the reform bill of 1860, like its predecessors, was doomed, and would soon be consigned to the limbo of rejected measures. The country was indifferent to it; the press sneered at it; and it encountered keen opposition from both sides of the House. Accordingly, on the second week of June Lord John Russell withdrew his bill, thus adopting a course which Mr. Disraeli described as "wise and not undignified."

Parliament was prorogued by commission August 28, 1860, and a session in which there had been much talk—that kind of parliamentary eloquence which is the tomb of parliamentary action—but little actual result, came to an end.

During the winter of this year Mr. Disraeli made a speech which excited a good deal of attention at the time. The question of church-rates was then being agitated by the nonconformist element in the country, and had frequently come before parliament, where hostility to the tax was slowly but gradually gaining ground.* At a meeting

* Before the abolition of this tax church-rates were payable by the parishioners and occupiers of the land within a parish, for the purpose of repairing and maintaining "the body of the church and the belfry, the churchyard fence, the bells, seats, and ornaments, and of defraying the expenses attending the service of the church." The duty of keeping the church in repair devolved on the rector, or vicar, or both together, in

of clergy and laity of the rural deanery at Amersham, Mr. Disraeli (December 4, 1860) was asked to express his views on the subject. The speech he then delivered was one of the first of a series upon the necessity of the union between church and state.

In this country, he began, great issues were generally tried on collateral points. It was now accepted that the discussion of the question of church-rates involved that of a national church; therefore it was of the last importance that churchmen should not make a mistake in the matter. "I will view," he said, "the question now only secularly, and even in that limited sense I shrink from realizing what would be the consequences to this country of the termination of the connection between church and state. The political and social relations of the national church to England must be considered. As for the political, the termination of the alliance must break up our parochial constitution. Our political constitution is built upon our parochial constitution. The parish is one of the strongest securities for local government, and on local government mainly depends our political liberty. As to the social relations of the church with the community, they are so comprehensive and so complicated, so vast and various, that the most far-seeing cannot calculate the consequences of the projected change. It is not merely the education of the people

that is concerned, it is even their physical condition. I would almost say, that if by some convulsion of nature some important district of the country, one on which the food and the industry of the community mainly depend, were suddenly swept from the surface, the change would not be greater than would arise by the withdrawal of the influence of the church from our society. The fact is, the Church of England is part of England—a point of view not sufficiently contemplated by those who speculate on changes in her character and position."

Why, he asked, had the movement for the abolition of church-rates been so active and progressive of late years? He attributed it to the want of union and organization among churchmen. When churchmen were united, the church was never endangered. That was shown in the years which elapsed between 1831 and 1841. During that period England was in a state of semi-revolution, and Ireland of semi-rebellion; the Church of England was the chosen arena for the fierce struggle of parties, and governments were formed on the principle of appropriating its property to secular purposes. But the church baffled all those attempts, because churchmen were united and organized. Why were they not united and organized now? There had been no union and organization among churchmen since 1841.

Mr. Disraeli attributed this want of union and organization to two causes: first, to the disruption of political parties; secondly, to disputes among the clergy themselves. Were these permanent causes? It was not the first time, by many instances, that political connections had been broken up in this country; but there was an irresistible tendency in their public life, that parties both in and out of parliament should reflect opinion, and not personal interests and feelings. Time, therefore, inevitably adjusted, as it was then adjusting, the proper balance of political connections. With respect to the controversies among the

proportion to their benefice, where there were both in the same church. Church-rates existed in England by virtue of the common law, and though nothing is known as to their commencement, or introduction, the tax dates back to a remote past. Church-rates, or something equivalent, certainly appear to have been in existence as a payment by the laity, independent of tithes, in the time of Canute, whose sixty-third law, "*De Fano Reficiendo*," states that all persons ought of right to contribute to the repair of churches. The tax was imposed by the parishioners themselves at a meeting summoned by the churchwardens for that purpose. If the parish failed to meet, the churchwardens might themselves impose a rate; but if the meeting assembled it rested with the parishioners to determine the amount of the rate, and it would seem that they also had the power to negative the imposition of a rate altogether. The existing poor-rate of the parish was generally taken as the criterion for the imposition of the church-rate. The ecclesiastical courts had the exclusive authority of deciding on the validity of a rate, and the liability of a party to pay it.

clergy themselves, as distinguished from the church generally, he thought there was exaggeration and misconception. It was impossible—and were it possible, it was not, perhaps, to be desired—that in a national church of a free country like England, there should not be discrepancy of opinion among the clergy on matters of ritual, and even, in some degree, of doctrine. It had always been so. Where there was opinion, and especially religious opinion, there would be periods of excess. They lived in one of those periods. They were periods of trial, but not necessarily of danger; and those who too readily augured from them the worst consequences showed an ignorance alike of human nature and the history of their own country. They should remember that before this a cardinal's hat had been offered to an Anglican archbishop, while there was also a time when a Socinian prelate sat on the episcopal bench; but the Church of England had survived those temptations and experiments. The great body of the community had always rallied round that *via media* which had been eulogized and vindicated by the most eminent of their divines, by Hooker, by Taylor, by Barrow. The period of excess had passed away, and the influence of the church had remained only greater and more beneficial.

"But then," asked Mr. Disraeli, "arises the question, Suppose churchmen were again united and organized, as I hope they may be, on what course shall they agree with regard to church-rates? We cannot conceal from ourselves that on this subject there are two opinions among our friends. Some are for compromise. What does compromise mean? Does it mean improvement? If so, I am for compromise. It may be expedient that the church-rate levied in a district should be applied to the church of that district; that when the rate is levied, the purposes to which it is to be applied should be more precisely defined; that the means of obtaining the rate when voted should be more prompt

and effective; that there should be no particular charge called church-rate, but a general parochial rate from which the necessary expenses for the fabric and the service of the church should be deducted by the wardens under certain limitations. All these may be improvements, but all these are matters of detail; and what is the use of attempting to legislate on matters of detail when the principle is not only contested, but rejected in one branch of the legislature? Some of our friends would go further than this. They would exempt the Dissenter from the charge. That is not compromise; that is surrender. It is acknowledging that the Church of England is no longer a national church. But it is conceding more even than that. This is a public charge of which all the circumstances are of a popular character. It is ancient; it is for a general, not to say a common purpose; it is levied by public votes. If in a country where the majority decide everything, the minority are, on the ground of conscientious scruple, to be exempted from a public payment, on what principle can society be held together? Landowners might have a conscientious scruple against paying the public creditor; peace societies might have a conscientious scruple against paying war taxes. What the Dissenter demands is, in fact, an oligarchical privilege; and the principle, if conceded and pursued, may lead to general confusion."

There was one more objection, he continued, urged against levying the church-rate; that it was impracticable. Was it impracticable? In the vast majority of parishes it was raised with facility. But then it was urged that the parishes which refused were the parishes of large towns, and that their aggregate population was scarcely inferior to that vast majority of parishes in which it was raised. Yet their immense population were not Dissenters. They were not the votaries of rival creeds and establishments. They were ignorant, or indifferent, or more, unfortunate. Were they, then, to maintain that the church was to retire

from the duty of contending with their unsympathizing and unbelieving mass? The greatest triumphs of the church had been accomplished in great towns. If the influence of the church in great towns was limited, it was not because her means were ineffective, but because they were insufficient. When they considered the nature of the religious principle, he was a bold man who would maintain that in their teeming seats of industry there might not be destined for the church a triumphant future. Who could foresee the history of the next quarter of a century? It would not probably be as tranquil as the last. What if it were to be a period of great religious confusion and excitement? The country would cling to a church which combined toleration with orthodoxy, and united divine teaching with human sympathies. Was it wise, then, publicly to announce by legislation that the Church of England relinquished the character of a national church?

On these grounds, then, he declined to sanction the principle of exemption. He felt deeply the responsibility of giving such advice. He knew he was opposing the recommendation of the committee of the House of Lords, in 1859, and of what was then at least the unanimous opinion of the bench of bishops. He need not say that for the House of Lords he entertained profound respect. In maturity of judgment and calmness of inquiry he thought the labours of the great committees of the Lords superior to those of the House of Commons; in acuteness of investigation they were not inferior; but in the interpretation of public opinion, he thought, and it was perhaps in the necessity of things, that the Commons had the advantage. He thought that the Lords' committee were precipitate in their course in the matter of church-rates; he thought they had mistaken public humour for public opinion.

"I am sustained in the difficult and painful course I am taking," he said in conclusion, "by the recollection of

what occurred in the spring, and at the last meeting of the clergy and laity in this deanery. At that time the second reading of Sir John Trelawny's bill* had been carried by a much reduced majority, and the advocates of what is fallaciously called compromise were strongly in favour of what they termed seizing the opportunity for a settlement. I was of a different opinion. I did not think that the advantage the church had then obtained was only a happy casualty. I thought it was the break of dawn. I did my utmost to dissuade my friends from relinquishing the contest, and ultimately, on my own responsibility, opposed the third reading of Sir John Trelawny's bill. The whole country was agitated on the occasion by the opponents of the church to regain the lost ground. Instead of that, the majority against church-rates, which had sat like an incubus on the church for twenty years, virtually disappeared. We owe to that division our commanding position. It is in our power, if we choose it, to close this controversy for ever, not by a feeble concession, but by a bold assertion of public right. We sent 5000 petitions to the House of Commons last session in favour of that public right; let us send 15,000 this. Every parish should have its petition; they should not be merely signed by the incumbent and churchwardens, as they are in some cases; or by ratepayers merely, as in many cases; but by as many persons as they can obtain. It is the cause of all. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that

* On the Abolition of Church-Rates Bill introduced (February 8, 1860) by Sir John Trelawny, Mr. Disraeli strongly opposed the measure. He objected to it because it would revolutionize the parochial constitution of the country, and tend to the downfall of the Established Church. In the debate on the third reading of the bill (April 27, 1860), Mr. Disraeli again raised his voice in opposition. The abolition of church-rates, he said, would act detrimentally to the interests of the Church of England. If the House believed the existence of the Church of England to be one of the strongest elements of society, one of the most powerful of their institutions, and the best security of their liberties, they should reject the measure proposed by Sir John Trelawny. The bill passed by a majority of nine. On being sent up to the Lords it was rejected by a majority of ninety-seven.

petitions produce little effect on the House of Commons. They produce great effect. The number of petitions, the number and nature of their signatures, the classes from which they proceed, are all weighed and canvassed. There is a report every week sent by a select committee to every member of parliament on these heads. The clergy never extensively move in this manner without exercising great authority. You cannot petition too much. You should not wait for the attack. You should send in your petitions as soon as parliament meets, on a broad issue, in favour of maintaining the union between church and state, and incidentally in favour of church-rates. You should also encourage and establish church defence associations in every part of England. You should habituate the laity to act with the clergy in all matters of public moment to the church. There is also a third course to take, and here I will address myself particularly to my clerical friends. The laity, through that excellent body the Committee of Laymen, have done their duty in that respect. I have always discouraged the clergy from entering into mere party politics; but now I tell you

frankly that if you want to succeed, you must bring your influence to bear on members of the House of Commons. The question of church-rates has fortunately not yet fallen into the catalogue of party politics. More than one member of the present cabinet records at least his vote in their favour. The clergy must make members of parliament understand that, though this is not a party, it is a political question, and a political question on which in their minds there ought not to be, and there could not be, any mistake. I can assure you of my own knowledge there are many members of parliament who on this question give careless votes, and think that by so doing they are giving some vague liberal satisfaction without preparing any future inconvenience for themselves. Let our clerical friends, Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal, make these gentlemen understand that in their opinion on the union of church and state depend in a large measure the happiness, the greatness, and the liberty of England." As we shall have occasion to notice in subsequent chapters of this work, this advice did not fall on deaf ears.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VIGILANT CRITIC.

THE atmosphere at this time was charged with war, and with that irritation which often results in war. Across the Atlantic the American Union was in a state of disintegration. Abraham Lincoln had been declared president-elect of the United States, and political agitation at once began to work and seethe in the South. For some time observers of American politics had been predicting a conflict between the northern and southern states of the Union. The abolitionists, as they daily increased in strength, became more and more clamorous against slavery. Their declamations, however, mattered little to the South, so long as the North were in such a minority as not to affect materially the course of legislation; but when the abolitionists, owing to immigration and the spread of English ideas throughout the North, swelled into a formidable faction the slave-owners became alarmed, and banding themselves together, resolved to resist any infringement of their rights. The division between the two parties widened every day, and it was soon evident from the tone of Congress that a struggle for the mastery was impending. The fight for the Territories first brought both sections into collision. The advantage of attaching each new state to its own side was apparent to both of the contending parties—an advantage which was the more manifest as the rival powers became more equal, and the accession of a free state was received with a joy by the North only to be equalled by the delight of the South at the addition of another slave state. Upon the proposal for the admission of Kansas into the Union the argument degenerated into a free fight. The Southerners poured hordes of desperadoes into the territory, who at

once proceeded to violent measures against the immigrants transported there by the organization of the abolitionists. After a fierce struggle, which resulted in no little slaughter, the anti-slavery section was victorious, and ousted their opponents. The South were not only defeated, but found themselves more and more incapable of resisting the pressure put upon them in Congress by the abolitionists. The Missouri compromise, which allowed slavery below a certain latitude, was annulled, and measures passed prohibiting the introduction of negro bondage into any territory of the United States.

Then came the insurrection at Harper's Ferry. John Brown, a man who had fought with signal courage in Kansas against the supporters of slavery, now conceived the idea of waging war with the dealers in human flesh, and resolved to smite the Southerners hip and thigh. Accompanied by a few followers, he crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, and entered Virginia, where he incited the slaves to rise against their owners. His words did not fall on unwilling ears; an insurrection was created, and a smart conflict between master and negro ensued. After a brief struggle Brown was captured, tried for treason, and sentenced to death. "Gentlemen," he said to his judges, "make an end of slavery, or slavery will make an end of you." Much sympathy was expressed for his fate; and the South had to confess that the extinction of their rights as slave-owners was certain as soon as the abolitionists could muster strength enough to control the government. The election of Buchanan, the pro-slavery candidate, as president of the United

States, delayed for a time the necessity of secession. But only for a time. It was evident that the election of 1860 would settle the vexed question whether the North or the South should govern the Union. At last the crisis came. The South put forth all their energies, and were completely defeated. Abraham Lincoln received the vast majority of Northern votes, and consequently triumphed. Symptoms of disunion at once appeared, and several of the states seceded from the Union. Before the end of the first month in 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had severed themselves from the American Union.

Complete independence of Northern control was now aimed at. Delegates from the seceded states assembled at Montgomery, in Alabama, and agreed to a constitution and provisional government of which Jefferson Davis was elected president. The constitution was almost identical with that of the United States, but with a more emphatic enunciation of the rights of property in slaves. The selection of Jefferson Davis for the office of president of the Southern confederacy was most judicious. He was admirably suited for the post. "An advocate of states rights on principle," writes an American historian, "he was naturally a good representative of a community which owed its existence to the assertion of state rights. With a judicious mixture of audacity and caution, he knew when to put forth his energies with effect, and when to wait for his opportunity. A man of pure private morals and temperate habits, he won general respect; unselfish, single-minded, and self-reliant, he commanded the admiration of the mass of his Southern countrymen. His bearing and tone fitted him to be the elect of the planter aristocracy—lofty, determined, and full of contempt for those who held opposite principles. When unbiassed by personal friendship, he showed himself an acute judge of men, regarded as tools for working out a design;

above all, incapable of passion, and therefore perhaps the most suited to mould a passionate and impulsive race. An admirable judge of effect, no man knew better when to assume virtuous indignation or the appearance of outraged dignity. A scholar, and in style a gentleman, all his official documents were penned in such clear and elaborate English that many persons in the Old country gave all Southerners the credit of a refinement to which only the upper ten thousand of the slave states had any just claim."

In the West civil war was on the eve of breaking out, but in the distant East war was happily at an end. Before the close of the year 1860, China had agreed to the terms imposed upon her, and England and France had laid down their arms. The Chinese, however, had ample occasion to regret having aroused the animosity of such formidable enemies. The Taku forts, at the mouth of the Peiho, had been captured; the battles of Chang-kia-wan and Pa-li-chau had facilitated the advance of the allied English and French upon Peking; Peking had been invested, and the summer palace of the Emperor of China, after having been ravaged by the French, had been burnt to the ground to avenge the treacherous arrest and subsequent murder of those English who had started for Tanchow under a flag of truce. Peace was ushered in by a convention signed in Peking, by which the treaty of Tien-Tsin was ratified, and a large indemnity to be paid, and compensation in money given to the families of the murdered English prisoners. The treaty and convention were to be proclaimed throughout the empire.

In Europe the state of Italy gave rise to much anxiety. In spite of all protests from Austria the new kingdom, under the protecting influence of France, was rapidly developing its territories and resources. Garibaldi had landed at Marsala, in Sicily, and in a few days, notwithstanding the disapproval of the Sardinian government at his proceedings, had assumed the

dictatorship of the island in the name of King Victor Emmanuel. A Liberal ministry had been formed at Naples, the town was declared in a state of siege, and the queen-mother had to take refuge in Gaeta. Shortly afterwards Francis II. took his departure from Naples, and Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed King of Italy. Then, whilst the peninsula was consolidating itself into a kingdom, diplomacy, warfare, and intrigue were employing all their strength to defeat the objects of the Sardinian government, and the wishes of the Italian people. Against the movements of Sardinia, Austria protested, the Pope protested, and the King of the Two Sicilies was in arms supporting his protest. On the other hand Victor Emmanuel, conscious that the hopes of the Italian people were centred in his aim to make the peninsula, from the gulf of Taranto to the Lepontine Alps, an Italian kingdom, still pressed on and declined to stay his hand.

With foreign affairs in this condition, the houses of parliament met February 5, 1861. In the speech from the throne Her Majesty stated that her relations with foreign powers continued to be friendly and satisfactory; that events of great importance were taking place in Italy, but "believing that the Italians ought to be left to settle their own affairs, I have not thought it right to exercise any active interference in those matters;" that the operations of the allied forces in China had been attended with complete success, and that all matters in dispute had been satisfactorily settled; that "serious differences have arisen among the states of the North American Union. It is impossible for me not to look with great concern upon any events which can affect the happiness and welfare of a people nearly allied to my subjects by descent, and closely connected with them by the most intimate and friendly relations. My heartfelt wish is that these differences may be susceptible of a satisfactory adjustment." The subject of reform was not mentioned. The omission

was generally approved of; but when we remember that the Conservative party had been ousted from office solely because it had introduced a reform bill not sufficiently inclusive to satisfy the wants of the people, and now that the Liberals were in power the subject was shelved altogether, such an ignominious desertion of what had been so frequently spoken of as a great political necessity, certainly did not speak very highly either for the sincerity or the consistency of the government of Lord Palmerston. We do not often approve of the coarse invective indulged in by Mr. Bright, but on this occasion the censure he passed upon the conduct of ministers was fully deserved.

In the debate upon the address Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. He approved of the course the government had adopted with regard to the subject of parliamentary reform. "A measure for the reconstruction of this House," he said, "should not be introduced at a time when there is no probability of its being accepted; and a minister would incur a great responsibility who again introduced such a subject from a mistaken sense of honour to a party which was anything but unanimous in supporting his original proposal." At the present moment the country was more interested in foreign than in domestic matters. He himself was bewildered as to the policy of the government with respect to their foreign relations, and as to the prospects of the country with regard to any of those great questions which arose out of them. He wished to know what was the real state of their relations with France, or whether they were looking about for new allies? If a new alliance was meditated, upon what principle was it to be formed? Was it to be upon a disturbing or tranquillizing principle? Were we to support Sardinia against Naples, or Naples against Sardinia? Were we to support Austria against Venetia? Who knew? We had supported Sardinia, and we had supported Naples; we had supported Austria,

and we had not deserted Venetia. In the old days diplomacy was conducted in a secret fashion, whilst now we had "a candid foreign policy." "What in former times," he said, "in the days of secret diplomacy, would have been a soliloquy in Downing Street, now becomes a speech in the House of Commons."

And yet with all this candour, no one knew what policy the government was adopting. Ministers were in favour of Italian unity; had they effected it? "We know," said Mr. Disraeli, "that a powerful French army was powerfully entrenched in the centre of Italy. We know that the contemplated capital of Italy is not in the possession of the Italians. In this age of jubilant nationality Rome is still garrisoned by the Gauls. We know that Venetia is bristling with Austrian artillery, and swarming with German and Slavonian legions. We know that even the King of the Two Sicilies, deprived of his crown by universal and unanimous suffrage, unfortunately followed by frequent insurrections and martial law, is even at this moment in possession of the two prime strongholds of his kingdom. We know that in the south of Italy they have combined the horrors of revolution with the shame of conquest. These are not the characteristics of a united Italy." He did not deny that Italy might finally be united; but it would not be by the moral influence of England, but by the will and the sword of France.

"It is the will of France," he said, "that can alone restore Rome to the Italians; it is the sword of France—if any sword can do it—that alone can free Venetia from the Austrians. If the unity of Italy is to be effected by such influences and by such means, are we to suppose that a sovereign who is described as profound and crafty, and a people whom we know to be ambitious and quickwitted, will be prepared to make such an effort and to endure such a sacrifice—such a surpassing sacrifice and such an enormous effort—

without obtaining some result? Why, it would belie every principle of human nature. We cannot impute it to that sovereign and to such a people as the French, that they would not after such exertions expect to obtain some great political and public advantage. And it is obvious what that result would be. Those who under the circumstances I have stated will free the nation, will make their terms, and will be justified in making their terms. They will have an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Italy; and the Emperor of the French will then appear in the character which he has himself shadowed out, for which he has prepared the world, which the policy he had hitherto pursued with regard to Italy has shown that he has—not too anxiously—sought to fulfil, foreseeing its difficulties as well as its glory. The Emperor of the French will then come forward in the character of the head of the Latin race. He will find himself the emancipator of Italy at the head of a million of bayonets. A million of disciplined, and even of distinguished soldiers will be at his command and behest, and then it will be in his power—you having forced him to a policy in Italy which at first he was unwilling to pursue—to make those greater changes and aim at those greater results which I will only intimate and will not attempt to describe."

Mr. Disraeli then suggested that the Italian question should be settled on the basis of the treaty of Villafranca; that treaty secured a great southern barrier to Germany; it did not destroy the independence of the Pope; it did not endanger the independence of Switzerland, whilst Savoy and Nice still remained an appanage of the King of Sardinia. Any other course, he said, would menace England with danger. If the unity of Italy was to be effected, it could only be effected by a power which occupied Italy in great force; that unity could not be established under such auspices without results dangerous to the repose of Europe. It was therefore

absolutely necessary for ministers to be fully informed as to the relations of France with Italy.

In reply Lord John Russell stated, that Mr. Disraeli had conjured up doubts and fears which had no existence in fact. The government had constantly upheld the principle that Italy should be free to choose her own rulers and to settle her own affairs as she thought best. France had declared that no troops, Austrian or French, should be used to reinstate the deposed grand-dukes; and Austria had pledged her word not to cross the frontier. If the King of Naples would have granted a constitution, ministers would have preferred to see two kingdoms in Italy instead of one; still that was a question for the Italians themselves, and they were the best judges on that point. The policy of non-intervention was concurred in by France, and between the government and the Emperor of the French there was entire concord. The address was then agreed to.

The war in China having been concluded, the thanks of both houses of parliament were voted to the officers and men in Her Majesty's service who had been engaged in the expedition. In the House of Commons the vote was proposed by Lord Palmerston in a highly eulogistic speech, and seconded (February 14, 1861) by Mr. Disraeli. The leader of the Opposition acquitted himself with that tact and grace which always entered into his ceremonious speeches.

"The army and navy of England," he said, "have more than once expressed their conviction that one of their greatest rewards is to receive the thanks of parliament; and I trust I may say for the House that we consider it one of our greatest privileges to offer the expression of our thanks and admiration for their achievements. Although in the course of events that have occurred in China it is impossible to point to any of those immortal fields which posterity ever afterwards looks at with feelings of awe and admiration, yet merely in a military sense, and regarded simply in

reference to military considerations, there is one view of the case the importance of which cannot be overstated; and that is, that in a remote part of the world, and in a strange climate, we have found the health of our troops so wonderfully preserved. I attribute this to our now perfect organization, and to the application of all the resources of modern science to the maintenance of the health and the equipment of our troops; and if, as I believe, this result is not of an exceptional character, but one on which we may depend for the future, we may have the satisfaction of feeling that, so far as this is concerned, we have already mitigated one of the miseries of war. The noble viscount [Palmerston] has touched upon the singularity of such great results having been achieved, in a distant part of the world, by so small a body of men and at such a trifling sacrifice. Indeed, I think this is a subject which well deserves the consideration of the House. A handful of men, not, I believe, amounting in numbers to those who followed Xenophon, have waged war in a country almost in the remotest part of the globe, and have dictated peace in the ancient capital of a nation which numbers more than one-third of its population. Sir, this is not the first occasion during the last quarter of a century when mankind have been impressed with the immense influence which Europe exercises over the rest of the world. This is not the first occurrence of exploits which has proved the predominant power of that part of the globe in which it is our happiness to exist. But there are other considerations connected with this result which ought not, I think, to be absent from our thoughts. At this moment, under Providence, it is not merely this quarter of the globe, but we may say it is Western Europe that commands the world. Sir, if that power be so irresistible, if those means be so great, I think we ought all to feel that the moral responsibility of their exercise is proportionately increased. This appears to be a consideration which ought not to be wanting in the

councils of the sovereign, and which may blend advantageously even with the triumphant gratitude of parliaments."

Though the government had declined for the present to interest itself in the question of parliamentary reform, several private members refused to be a party to the shelving of so important a subject. Mr. Locke-King, who had for the last few years vainly endeavoured to achieve the reduction of the county franchise to a £10 qualification, again came forward to ride his hobby. He moved "that leave be given to bring in a bill to extend the franchise in counties in England and Wales." As there was no prospect, he said, of a government reform bill that session he thought the present a suitable moment to introduce the question once more before the House, and to propose an instalment of reform, extending the county franchise to £10 occupiers. If the House acceded to that proposition, it "would tend not only to improve, but to consolidate our institutions." Lord Palmerston replied, that he would neither oppose the motion nor argue the subject of the bill. There was a time for waiting as well as a time for action, and he thought the present was a time for waiting. He regretted that some of his friends, who piqued themselves upon being independent members, had deemed it their duty to anticipate the action of the ministers of the crown; such persons must, therefore, take upon themselves all the responsibility of the future progress of their measures, and allow the government perfect freedom of action in the matter. Mr. Disraeli said (Feb. 19, 1861) that, under the circumstances, he was not prepared to oppose the introduction of the bill, though every day he was more strongly of opinion, that if there ought to be a measure for the reconstruction of parliament, it should be large and comprehensive.

"If you cannot pass large and comprehensive measures," he said, "the only conclusion which I can draw is that

there is no necessity for them; but, when you are dealing with a subject so vast as the reconstruction of parliament, you require all the responsibility of a ministry, and all the information and all the regard to various interests which can be secured by it, but which cannot be expected from gentlemen who arrogate to themselves the title of 'independent members'—a title to which I trust that we all, even when in office, have a fair claim. An independent member takes up a fragment of a great subject; he becomes enamoured with the results of his own meditations; he thinks that the conclusions at which he has arrived from the force of his own thought are the only ones which can save the state; and he is too eager to force those conclusions upon the acceptance of parliament, without reference to the interests which their adoption may injure, but which ought to be duly considered in any scheme which attempts to do justice to the whole country. I have a strong objection to the measure which is introduced to-night by the hon. gentleman. I think that it would in many counties give power to those who are not fairly connected with the predominant property and the predominant industry of the county. . . . I cannot myself conceive at this moment—I am unable to form any clear idea—as to what can be the object of hon. gentlemen opposite and their supporters in attempting this reform of the House of Commons by measures of retail.

"The great wholesale firm have announced that it is a transaction beyond their powers of capital and enterprise. What probability of success, then, can attend these hucksters, who come forward to satisfy the wants of the nation, when the great association has announced that it is impossible for them to accomplish the feat? Their object cannot be to obtain popularity in the country. I believe myself that, on the whole, there is no subject so unpopular in England at present as parliamentary reform. Is it to obtain popularity in this House? I will say nothing of my friends around me,

who, I think, during the campaign of reform last year, behaved with great temper and forbearance, and gave every fair opportunity to the government to carry their bill if they could. But I can say something of the feelings of hon. gentlemen opposite, because month after month I watched their countenances, and saw men representing capital cities and large constituencies whose teeth were chattering in their heads when the order of the day was read. Their pallid visages could not be concealed from the commonest observers; you found them in the lobbies shaking in their shoes at the threatening invasion of a £6 constituency. Why, sir, these are traits which convince me that the hon. gentleman and his friends will obtain no popularity among their co-mates and colleagues in this House by the course they propose to pursue. Well, then, what can be their motive? Is it the honourable object of proving that, though they are taking an unpopular course so far as the country is concerned—though they are taking an odious course so far as their intimate friends are concerned—that they are still consistent, they have not changed their minds, and that, though changes may have occurred in other quarters, they are the same as when they presented themselves upon the hustings? If that be the result which they desire, then I say it is one which they can obtain without wasting the time of parliament, and without still further injuring that cause of parliamentary reform to which they are devoted." Mr. Disraeli then concluded by recommending these "independent members" to hold a public meeting to prove to the country that their opinions were unchanged, and suggested that their friends should take the opportunity to present them with a testimonial. He would subscribe.

The motion of Mr. Locke-King was agreed to without a division, and on the second reading of the bill (March 13, 1861) Mr. Disraeli again addressed the House on the subject. Lord John Russell had said, that he fully agreed with the leader of the Opposition

that the representation of the people was a subject which could only be dealt with in a complete and comprehensive manner, but that he thought an exception ought to be made in regard to the county franchise. "Now, why make an exception in regard to the county franchise?" asked Mr. Disraeli. "Is the county franchise that portion of the franchise for which we find the largest number of applicants? Is it in the counties where you find persons most eager to claim the possession of the franchise? Is the county constituency in point of number inferior to the borough constituency? Is it not a notorious fact that the constituency represented by 150 county members of this House is more numerous than the constituency represented by more than 300 borough members? Then I want to know, if the noble lord admits the principle that we ought to deal only in a complete and comprehensive manner with the subject of parliamentary reform, on what grounds can the noble lord justify the exception he is now making? . . . With regard to the bill before us, I object to dealing with this question of the extension of the suffrage but in a complete and comprehensive measure. I deny that we can consider the due and legitimate incidence of the county franchise unless we take into consideration, at the same time, the franchise in the boroughs; and not merely that subject, but unless we take into consideration all which affects the representation of the people in parliament. That would be with me a sufficient reason for not entering into this discussion. But I will not say, as others have said, that if a large measure were brought before us, and this were portion of it, I could approve it. I entirely disapprove of this measure. I state, without equivocation, that this is not in any degree, either in its form or spirit, the measure which we proposed with respect to the county franchise in our bill."

Mr. Disraeli then defended the reform bill which the Conservative party had introduced, and showed how it differed

from the measure now before the House. "The other day," he continued, "we were told that the measure we brought forward with respect to the franchise in counties was identical with that brought forward by the hon. member for East Surrey. It was not so. The primary qualification in our bill certainly arose from a £10 occupation, but it was a £10 occupation of land. Our bill, too, included a county franchise founded on personal property, a lodger franchise, franchises founded on the possession of intelligence, and franchises of other kinds. But the mode by which a *bonâ fide* and virtual representation of the landed interest in all its classes was secured was not confined merely to the invention of franchises. We have been reminded to-night that in that bill there was a provision, that the possessor of a freehold should vote in the locality in which the freehold was placed. At the same time that we agreed that the £10 occupier in unrepresented towns should vote for the county, we also took care that the urban influence should not be overwhelming by regulating that the possessor of a freehold in a town should vote in the locality with which he was legitimately connected. There was no disfranchisement of 40s. freeholders in the bill I brought forward. That charge has been made in this House to-night. A bill which was not allowed to be read a second time is of course liable to misrepresentation. We looked upon the 40s. freehold franchise as one of the soundest, most valuable, and most constitutional in the country; it was the very last we should have dreamt of abolishing. All we proposed was that in a large scheme, consisting of so many franchises, the elector should vote in the locality in which his qualification was situate.

"But is that all? We have heard to-night of the great mischiefs that would occur if the bill of the hon. member for East Surrey were carried, by swamping, as the phrase is, the natural constituency of the counties representing the predominant property and

prime industry of the counties. Did we not provide against that? Did we not secure in our bill the revision of borough boundaries? What would occur under the bill of the hon. member for East Surrey is that Manchester or Birmingham, or fifty other great towns, might overwhelm the natural constituency of a county by a population which really is homogeneous with the civic and urban constituency of Manchester or Birmingham. What provision is there against such a result in the bill of the hon. member for Surrey? None; our revision of the existing borough boundaries met the difficulty. . . . I say all our arrangements for the county franchise were framed with this view—while we increased the garrison of the constitution, while we enlisted in support of the landed interest of the country a great variety of sympathies and influences, we endeavoured to secure for the landed interest that predominance which is necessary to public liberty; and that was the object, and the only object, we had. It was not to secure any petty interest of our own; but we recognized in the due preponderance of the land in the constitutional scheme the best and most efficacious security for local government and public liberty." Upon a division the "previous question," which had been moved by Mr. Augustus Smith, was negatived by 248 to 229; consequently the motion for the second reading could not be put, and the bill miscarried.

If Mr. Locke-King was never tired of bringing forward the subject in which he was interested, neither was Sir John Trelawny; and the question of the abolition of church-rates once more came up for discussion. The advice which Mr. Disraeli had given to his audience at Amersham had been accepted and eagerly acted upon. Throughout the country the cry arose that the abolition of church-rates involved the downfall of the national church. Meetings were held, societies were formed, pamphlets were published, and every effort made to impress upon the people generally that

church-rates and the established church went hand in hand together, and could not be abolished without danger to the religious interests of the country. The result of this agitation was soon apparent when Sir John Trelawny again brought his motion before the House.

The second reading of the bill was strenuously opposed by Mr. Disraeli. If that bill were carried, he said (February 27, 1861), the first effect would be to deprive the parishioners in vestry assembled of the privilege they then possessed of self-taxation. The abolition of church-rates would be an assault upon the independence of the parish and upon the integrity of the church. There were no just grounds of complaint against the tax. When the House came practically to consider the question, it was impossible to say that there was any class which experienced a grievance from the exercise of a law ancient in its character, popular in its principle, and which all must admit was, if not for a general, for a public purpose. He did not forget the dissenter. "We have heard," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "a great deal of dissenters in this and previous debates on this subject; and one would almost suppose from the manner in which the dissenter was mentioned that he was some stranger in the country or some wild animal. Why, a dissenter is our friend, our neighbour, our tenant, our tradesman; he is an Englishman animated by all the feelings and principles of Englishmen. What is the position of a dissenter with respect to this? If he finds himself in a majority in any parish where a rate is proposed, he has a victorious power of self-defence in that majority, and he can by the votes of himself and friends shield himself from these grievances of which you say that he complains. What is the position of a dissenter in parishes in which he is in the minority? In that case, if he be animated by the same feelings of any other Englishman—and I know by experience he is so—he yields to the opinion of the majority, for such he knows is the

principle upon which our social system is established. If the majority is overwhelming, he yields without a murmur; if it be slight he can exercise his influence if he chooses, so that next year the majority may change into a minority." No one, maintained Mr. Disraeli, could fairly say that on the ground of grievance the abolition of the law should be urged by dissenters.

Mr. Disraeli then denied that his opposition to the measure was for party purposes. "The Church of England," he said in conclusion, "is not a mere depository of doctrine. The Church of England is a part of England—it is a part of our strength and a part of our liberties, a part of our national character. It is a chief security for that local government which a radical reformer (Mr. Bright) has thought fit to-day to designate as an 'archæological curiosity.' It is a principal barrier against that centralizing supremacy which has been in all other countries so fatal to liberty. And it is because the bill of the hon. baronet is opposed to these great influences—it is because the parishes which now are spoken of with contempt, and the church with feelings of a more vindictive character, are assailed by this bill—that I shall give it my uncompromising opposition."

On a division the second reading of the bill was carried by 281 to 266, being a considerable falling off from the previous majority in its favour. Thus encouraged, the Conservatives and the other defenders of church-rates, both in and out of the House, redoubled their exertions to defeat the measure; and with such success that on the third reading of the bill the Ayes and Noes were exactly equal, there being 274 on each side. The Speaker was consequently called upon to give a casting vote, and amid much cheering from the Opposition he supported the "Noes," stating as his reason that as the numbers were so large on both sides at this stage of the proceedings it was advisable to give

the House an opportunity of reconsidering the question. The bill was thus lost.

During the March of this year the Duchess of Kent, the mother of our gracious queen, passed to her rest. Addresses of condolence from both Houses were presented to the throne on the sad occasion. In the House of Commons the address was moved by Lord Palmerston, and seconded by the leader of the Opposition. "The ties," said Mr. Disraeli (March 18, 1861), "which united Her Majesty to her lamented parent were not only of an intimate, but of a peculiar character. In the history of our reigning House, none were ever placed as this widowed princess and her royal child. Never before devolved on a delicate sex a more august or a more awful responsibility. How those great duties were encountered—how fulfilled—may be read in the conscience of a grateful and a loyal people. Therefore, notwithstanding the serene retirement of her life, the name of the Duchess of Kent will remain in our history from its interesting and benignant connection with an illustrious reign. Sir, for the great grief which has fallen on the queen there is only one source of human consolation—the recollection of unbroken devotedness to the being whom we have loved and whom we have lost. That tranquillizing and sustaining memory is the inheritance of our sovereign. It is generally supposed that the anguish of affection is scarcely compatible with the pomp of power, but that is not so in the present instance. She who reigns over us has elected, amid all the splendour of empire, to establish her life on the principle of domestic love. It is this, it is the remembrance and consciousness of this, which now sincerely saddens the public spirit, permits a nation to bear its heartfelt sympathy to the foot of a bereaved throne, and whisper solace even to a royal heart."

A few weeks after this formal manifestation of a national sorrow, which was really felt, Mr. Gladstone introduced (April 15, 1861) his financial statement. The expenditure he estimated at £70,000,000, and

the income at £71,823,000, that being the largest estimate of revenue ever laid before the country. He proposed to apply the surplus in the reduction of the income tax by 1*d.* per pound—the 10*d.* being reduced to 9*d.*, and the 7*d.* to 6*d.*—and to abolish the duty on paper. The first-mentioned reduction would absorb £850,000, and the latter £665,000. He also proposed to re-enact the tea and sugar duties for one year. Into the various discussions criticising the details of this statement we need not enter. Mr. Disraeli warned the House to proceed with more caution than in respect to the budget of last year. The deficiency of last year, he said, appeared to have been supplied by increasing the liabilities and diminishing the resources of the country, by reducing the balances in the exchequer and adding to the debt. He would not dispute the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer that there was a real surplus, though the mode by which it had been arrived at—the retention and renewal of war duties—was, to say the least, very peculiar. He offered no opposition to the income tax, but he strongly objected to the war tax on sugar, and he saw no occasion for the repeal of the paper duty.

The question as to the repeal of the paper duty was, however, on this occasion the chief bone of contention. Many members were of opinion that if taxes were to be remitted, the tax should be taken off tea in preference to that off paper. Then it was asked, if the paper duty was to be repealed, should the Commons send up another bill for its repeal to the Lords, and thus subject the proposal to another rejection?

After much discussion upon the subject, Mr. Gladstone came down to the House early in May and announced his intention to include all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, instead of dividing it into several bills as had formerly been the practice. This interference with the right of criticism of the peers led to a fierce and acrimonious debate. Mr. Macdonough, an eminent member of the Irish bar, argued

that no instance had ever before occurred in which a measure rejected by the Upper House had been annexed to a bill of supply, and passed by the Lower House in that compound form; that new precedents could not be created; and that such an attempt to annex to a money bill a measure distasteful to the peers was an interference with the rights and privileges of the House of Lords. Lord Robert Cecil characterized the step as designed "to avenge a special political defeat, to gratify a special pique, and to gain the doubtful votes of a special political section." Sir James Graham, though suffering from illness, spoke with his usual vigour on the side of the government proposal. "It is open," he said, "to the Lords to reject the whole; or if they think fit, they may alter a part of it; but according to the well-known principle, altering a portion is equal to the rejection of the whole. I have heard a sort of hustings-cry, 'Down with the paper duty, and up with the tea duty.' Now, I do not wish to raise an invidious hustings-cry; but if we are to have a hustings-cry—if that fatal issue should be joined, 'Up with the Lords, and down with the Commons'—if that issue be taken, I do not think that gentlemen on this side need be afraid of going to their constituents with that cry; and I very much mistake if the power and authority of the House of Commons would not be confirmed by a large majority."

Mr. Disraeli also criticised the course the government intended to pursue. He believed, he said (May 30, 1861), that their action might be justified by precedent; still it was "unwise, unnecessary, and impolitic." Why should the government make a change in the form of their proceedings, the only apparent object of which was to produce a collision and render conciliation impossible? "It is of great importance," he said, "even for the House of Commons, with all its power, to be on terms of good and cordial understanding with the other House of parliament. We live in an age of rapid transition. The character of this House

has been greatly changed within the memory of man, and the power of this House has been greatly increased. The power of the House of Lords, as we are often reminded, has no doubt at the same time been greatly diminished. During the last thirty years or more the Lords have lost a great deal of power. But we should be under a great mistake if we forgot to observe that they have also gained something. The House of Lords, indeed, can no longer exercise that power which the ancient barons exercised, because there was then only one kind of property in this country, and they were almost the sole possessors of it. The House of Lords cannot, indeed, exercise that power which was exercised by the great nobles who invented the constitution of 1688, and established an oligarchy in this country. No doubt all that is changed; but the House of Lords still possess a great and growing influence in the conviction of the national mind, that an intermediate body between the popular branch of the legislature and absolute legislation is a great security for public liberty and for temperate government. The people of England feel that the existence of a body of that kind is a great blessing; and all the public experience of Europe has assured them that that is a body which cannot be artificially created. They therefore consider it a very fortunate circumstance for this country that such an intermediate body should have risen, supported by property, by tradition, and by experience, ready to act with the critical faculty which is necessary when precipitate legislation is threatened, and at least to obtain time, so that upon all questions of paramount importance the ultimate decision should be founded on the mature opinion of an enlightened nation. Now, this is the great influence which the House of Lords possess, and it is a growing influence. I would further say, that if the House of Lords continue to be guided by the wise and temperate feelings which have animated them of late years, that is an influence that

I believe will increase, and will always be exercised for the public advantage; and I think that our discussions on our relations with the House of Lords, in reference to this very question of our financial policy, have assisted this House and assisted the country to arrive at sounder opinions upon the subject." Was it therefore wise or politic, he inquired, to irritate so useful an intermediate body? Was it time wasted to discuss questions which involved considerations of so delicate and important a character?

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to argue that in the remission of taxation war taxes should have the preference over all other taxes—a precedence which was a sound and popular doctrine. He would have had no objection had the whole of the surplus been devoted to the reduction of the income tax, since "it ought to be borne in mind that there is no tax the remission of which so greatly stimulates consumption." But undoubtedly the duty on tea should be reduced in preference to abolishing the excise on paper. He did not consider that the excise on paper was a greater disadvantage than an excise duty would be to any

other manufacture. He concluded by opposing the fiscal policy of the government, and maintained that in the remission of taxation the taxes on tea and sugar should first be removed before the paper duty was touched. By such a course ministers would maintain their faith with the great body of the people, and avoid offending the other branch of the legislature. The House divided, and the steps taken by the government in the matter were approved of by a majority of fifteen. Mr. Disraeli did not continue the contest, and the peers, finding resistance useless, eventually submitted.*

With the passing of the budget and the consequent repeal of the paper duty, the labours of the session came to an end. Parliament was prorogued August 6, 1861, and members went down into the country, glad to escape from duties which had been somewhat dull and wearisome. The Opposition had during the past session declined to put forth all its strength, or to avail itself of those tactics which, in the then divided state of the Liberal party, could, if not have overthrown the Palmerston cabinet, at least have gravely interfered with the course of legislation. The

* During the reign of Henry IV. it was decreed that it was the exclusive right of the House of Commons to grant supplies and to impose and appropriate all charges upon the people. The House of Lords has no power whatever to change or alter money bills—its functions are reduced to a simple assent or negative. As a co-ordinate branch of the legislature, the Lords can withhold their assent from any bill; and in former times their power of rejecting a money bill was expressly acknowledged by the Commons, but as for centuries they had forborne to exercise this power, it is now not admitted. "The occasion," writes Mr. Sheldon Amos, "on which the House of Lords might seem to have been weakened as an independent portion of the legislature was the repeal of the paper duties in 1861. When the House of Lords decided to retain a tax which the House of Commons had decided to have repealed, it joined issue, probably for the last time, on a question which hitherto had been less a matter of severe constitutional usage than of mutual courtesy between the Houses, and of almost undisputed custom. It was imputed to the House of Lords that it thereby in effect initiated a money bill, counter to the fixed popular notion and habitual practice that all propositions for taxing the people should first be addressed to the popular representatives in the Commons by the ministers of the crown, the functions of the Upper House being limited to the simple acceptance or rejection of the proposed tax. When Mr. Gladstone, on May 6, 1861, announced that he intended to include all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, he 'virtually placed the Lords,' as the Rev. W. M. Molesworth says in his History, 'in the position of being obliged to accept or reject the whole financial scheme; and, in fact, deprived them not only of the power that they had

exercised in the case of the paper duties, but of that power of examination and amendment of details which they had hitherto enjoyed without question or dispute.' The House divided on Mr. Gladstone's proposition, and his bill was carried by a narrow majority of fifteen. The dispute between the Houses was not carried any further. The victory was won in much the same way as the well-known constitutional victories of earlier times had been won by the two Houses as against the king. As in the older time the king could not obtain a supply without at least promising a redress of grievances—the acknowledgment of the grievances and the validity of the grant being henceforth bound up in one invisible whole—so, by the mere form of the reference from the one House to the other, the Lords were rendered incapable of dissenting from the repeal of the paper duties without rendering themselves responsible for a standstill of government, consequent upon their refusal to grant the crown the revenues necessary for carrying it on. This device, by which the pressure of one part of the legislature is brought to bear on the other, is obvious enough of its kind, but must be kept for use only on the rarest emergencies, at the risk of a deadlock occurring, and strong personal feelings concurring with the real demands of utility to relieve the situation in some other way than by the lasting subordination of that part on which pressure is brought to bear. A similar sort of pressure through the medium of money bills was brought to bear in France in 1877, when the president of the republic persistently refused to co-operate, according to the recognized constitutional forms, with the other departments of the legislature; and the same device is notoriously used with great frequency—not to say abused—in the English colonies having parliamentary institutions."

Conservative party was, however, superior to the ignoble machinations of a factious Opposition, and had before them but one object in view—the good of the country. At a banquet given to the late ministers at the Mansion House, Lord Derby (and his words were re-echoed by Mr. Disraeli) explained the reason which had induced his followers to support the present cabinet in office, rather than involve the country in a new series of embarrassments, arising from the divided state of political parties. “We are firmly convinced,” said Lord Derby, “that whatever our personal advantages might be, it is for the advantage of the country that there should not be constant changes of government. We desire to see a strong government, I fear we have not one at present, and I must confess honestly that I do not see the mode of forming a strong government; but that which is most to the prejudice of the country is a succession of weak governments and a perpetual change, creating both inconvenience and embarrassment—embarrassment to the sovereign, embarrassment and inconvenience in all our foreign and diplomatic arrangements, embarrassment and want of steadiness in carrying out our internal policy.”

During the autumn the nation was chiefly occupied in watching the course of events across the Atlantic. In the unhappy civil war that was then being waged English sympathy was almost exclusively engaged on the side of the Southerners. In spite of the South supporting the cause of slavery, it was remembered that the Southerners had a high regard for the mother country, and piqued themselves upon the good English blood that flowed in their veins, whilst many of the planters in their frequent visits to London had made themselves very popular among the higher classes of society. The people of the North, on the contrary, had of late years frequently crossed the path of England, and, by their arrogant tone and domineering diplomacy, had alienated many of those Englishmen who would willingly

have forgotten, for the sake of his better qualities, the offensive braggadocio, the low cunning, the egotistic and vindictive piety, and the social servility ill-masked by an aggressive independence, which so often constitute the chief elements in the character of the American north of the Potomac. The victories of the South were hailed with delight; and as state after state seceded from the Union, the news was received throughout the country with the warmest expressions of approval.

This sympathy was rendered all the stronger when the intelligence arrived of the *Trent* affair. Captain Wilkes, a bullying and impetuous naval officer, who then commanded the United States frigate the *San Jacinto*, having been informed that Messrs. Mason and Sliddell, two Southern gentlemen, were proceeding from Havannah to Europe, by the British mail steamer the *Trent*, as commissioners of the Confederate government, signalled the vessel and fired some shots across her bows. Thus compelled to stop, the *Trent* was boarded by some armed sailors from the American frigate, who demanded the persons of Messrs. Mason and Sliddell. The British captain refusing to accede to this request the Americans seized the two Southern passengers, took them forcibly from the *Trent*, and carried them away on board the frigate to Boston. The indignation that this high-handed act excited in England, and the strange enthusiasm it created among the unthinking masses in the United States, nearly led to a speedy rupture of the peace that had hitherto existed between the two countries. The highest legal authorities were consulted, and after a brief examination of the case, gave it as their distinct opinion that the action of Captain Wilkes was illegal. And now, throughout the length and breadth of England, there was but one loud cry for war and vengeance against those who had dared to insult the British flag. Lord Lyons, our minister at Washington, was instructed to quit America

within seven days unless the government of the United States consented to the unconditional liberation of Messrs. Mason and Sliddell. This message was supported by France, Austria, and Prussia, who thus showed the North that England was not isolated in the matter. The American government, not wishing to have two wars on their hands, prudently yielded to the demands of Lord Lyons; and the two Southern gentlemen, who had been the innocent cause of all this bellicose irritation, were released and put on board an English ship, and permitted to continue their voyage without any further interruption. The episode did not, however, tend to increase our sympathy for the North.

Whilst the country was under the influence of this irritation, Mr. Disraeli came forward at the annual meeting of the Oxford diocesan church societies, held at Aylesbury November 14, 1861, under the presidency of the bishop of Oxford, and explained the causes which had of late years led to an irritation of another kind. His subject was the Church of England, and he spoke at an opportune moment. The church then as now was torn by conflicting sections—the one seeking to undermine faith by the glamour of superstition, the other undermining faith by the power of intellect. Ritualism and Rationalism were the opposing forces, and between the two the position of the Church of England was in great jeopardy. In the opinion of Mr. Disraeli the Anglican church—with popish mummeries on one side, and open infidelity on the other, whilst Dissent was quick to seize upon any advantage which a breach in the church might offer—was only able to make an effectual stand against the arts of the invaders and of the traitors within the citadel, by presenting a firm and united resistance to the foe. Unhappily he saw the church disunited, and this want of union he attributed to three feelings, which in different degrees influenced different sections of churchmen. These feelings he described as

a feeling of perplexity, a feeling of distrust, and a feeling of discontent.

"The feeling of perplexity, I am told," he said, "arises from what is usually styled the state of parties in the church, which, from their apparently opposite courses, distract and enfeeble the efforts of churchmen. This feeling appears to me to be entirely without foundation. Parties have always existed in the Church of England. Nay, more, there never has been a Christian church, even those which have most affected the character of unity, in which parties have not equally prevailed. But there is this peculiarity in the Church of England, that parties within its pale have been always permitted, nay, recognized and sanctioned. Our church, always catholic and expansive in its character, has ever felt that the human mind was a manifold quality, and that some men must be governed by enthusiasm, and some controlled by ceremony. Happy the land where there is an institution which prevents enthusiasm from degenerating into extravagance, and ceremony from being degraded into superstition! No doubt, during the last thirty years there have been periods of excess on both sides. But in such great matters we cannot draw a general conclusion from so limited an observation, and the aggregate of experience, in my opinion, fully justifies the conviction that parties in the church are not a sign of its weakness, but rather a symbol of its strength.

"I come now to the feeling of distrust among churchmen. That, I hesitate not to say, is mainly attributable to the speculations on sacred things which have been recently published by certain clergymen of our church.* I deeply regret that publication—for the sake of the writers, for no other reason. I am myself in favour of free inquiry on all subjects, civil and religious, with no condition but that it be pursued with learning, argument, and conscience. But then I think we have a right to expect that free inquiry should be pursued by free inquirers. And in my opinion,

* "Essays and Reviews" were published Feb., 1860.

the authors of 'Essays and Reviews' have entered into engagements with the people of this country quite inconsistent with the views advanced in those prolusions. The evil is not so much that they have created a distrust in things; that might be removed by superior argument and superior learning. The evil is, that they have created a distrust in persons, and that is a sentiment which once engendered is not easily removed, even by reason and erudition. Setting, however, aside the characters of the writers, I am not disposed to evade the question whether the work itself is one which should justify distrust among churchmen. Perhaps it may not be altogether unsuitable that a layman should make a remark upon this subject, and that the brunt of comment should not always be borne by clergymen. Now, the volume of 'Essays and Reviews,' generally speaking, is founded on the philosophical theology of Germany. What is German theology? It is of the greatest importance that clearer ideas should exist upon this subject than I find generally prevail in most assemblies of my countrymen.

"About a century ago, German theology, which was mystical, became by the law of reactions critical. There gradually arose a school of philosophical theologians, which introduced a new system for the interpretation of scripture. Accepting the sacred narrative without cavil, they explained all the supernatural incidents by natural causes. This system in time was called Rationalism, and, supported by great learning and even greater ingenuity, in the course of half a century absorbed the opinion of all the intellect of Germany, and indeed greatly influenced that of every protestant community. But where now is German rationalism, and where are its results? They are erased from the intellectual tablets of living opinion. A new school of German theology then arose, which, with profound learning and inexorable logic, proved that Rationalism was irrational, and successfully substituted for it a new scheme of scriptural interpretation called the mythical. But,

if the mythical theologians triumphantly demonstrated, as they undoubtedly did, that Rationalism was irrational, so the mythical system itself has already become a myth; and its most distinguished votaries, in that spirit of progress which, as we are told, is the characteristic of the nineteenth century, and which generally brings us back to old ideas, have now found an invincible solution of the mysteries of existence in a revival of pagan pantheism.

"That, I believe, is a literally accurate sketch of the various phases through which the intellect of Germany has passed during the last century. Well, I ask, what has the church to fear from speculations so overreaching, so capricious, and so self-destructive? And why is society to be agitated by a volume which is at the best a second-hand medley of these contradictory and discordant theories? No religious creed was ever destroyed by a philosophical theory; philosophers destroy themselves. Epicurus was as great a man, I apprehend, as Hegel; but it was not Epicurus who subverted the religion of Olympus. But, it may be said, are not such lucubrations to be noticed and answered? Both, I reply. Yet, I may observe in passing, that those who answer them should remember that hasty replies always assist well-matured attacks. Let them be answered, then, by men equal to the occasion, and I doubt not that many such will come forward. That a book of that character, written by clergymen of the Church of England, should pass unnoticed by authority, would have been most inconsistent. The conduct of Convocation in this matter appeared to me to be marked by all that discretion and sound judgment which have distinguished its proceedings ever since its revival, and which are gradually, but surely, obtaining for it public confidence. It denounced what it deemed pestilent heresies, but it did not counsel the prosecution of the heretics. And here I am bound to say that I wish this frank and reasonable course had been followed in

high places. The wisest of men has said, 'For everything there is a season;' and the nineteenth century appears to me a season when the church should confute error, and not punish it.*

"Having touched upon the causes of perplexity and distrust, I will now say a word upon the third cause of the want of union among churchmen—the feeling of discontent. That is a feeling which prevails among a certain body of our brethren, who entertain what are deemed by some exalted notions respecting ecclesiastical affairs. I know that recent appointments to high places in the church,† and other public circumstances, in their opinion equally opposed to the spread and spirit of sound church principles, have made some look without any enthusiasm on the connection between church and state, and even contemplate without alarm the possible disruption of that union. It is impossible to speak of those who hold these opinions without respect, and I would say even affection, for we all of us to a great degree must share in the sentiments of those who entertain these opinions, though we may not be able to sanction their practical conclusions. But I think myself that these opinions rest on a fallacy; and that fallacy consists in assuming that if the dissolution of the tie between church and state took place, the church would occupy that somewhat mediæval position which, no doubt, in its time was highly advantageous to Europe, and to no country more than to England. My own opinion

differs from theirs. I do not believe that in this age or in this country the civil power would ever submit to a superior authority, or even brook a rival. I foresee, if that were to take place, controversy and contest between church and state as to their reciprocal rights and duties; possible struggle, probable spoliation. I for one am not prepared to run such hazards. I should grieve to see this great Church of England, this centre of light, learning, and liberty, sink into a position, relative to the nation, similar to that now filled by the Episcopal Church of Scotland, or possibly even subside into a fastidious, not to say finical, congregation.

"I hold that the connection between church and state is one which is to be upheld and vindicated on principles entirely in unison with the spirit of the age, with the circumstances with which we have to deal, and with the soundest principles of political philosophy. The most powerful principle which governs man is the religious principle. It is eternal and indestructible, for it takes its rise in the nature of human intelligence, which will never be content till it penetrates the origin of things and ascertains its relations to the Creator—a knowledge to which all who are here present well know that, unaided and alone, human intelligence can never attain. A wise government, then, would seek to include such an element in its means of influencing man; otherwise it would leave in society a principle stronger than itself, which in due season may assert its supremacy, and even perhaps in a destructive manner. A wise government, allying itself with religion, would, as it were, consecrate society and sanctify the state. But how is this to be done? It is the problem of modern politics which has always most embarrassed statesmen. No solution of the difficulty can be found in salaried priest-hoods and in complicated concordats. But by the side of the state of England there has gradually arisen a majestic corporation—wealthy, powerful, independent—with

* In the Lower House of Convocation, Dr Jelf (Feb. 26, 1861) brought up the question of "Essays and Reviews" by moving an address to the Upper House, asking it to take synodical action upon a book full of erroneous views, and applied by atheists and Socinians to further their ends. After some discussion, the motion was withdrawn in favour of an amendment by Dr. Wordsworth, the present bishop of Lincoln: "That the clergy of the Lower House of Convocation of the province of Canterbury, having regard to the unanimous censure which has been already pronounced and published by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces on certain opinions contained in a certain book called 'Essays and Reviews,' entertain an earnest hope that, under the Divine blessing, the faithful zeal of the Christian church may be enabled to counteract the pernicious influence of the erroneous opinions contained in the said volume."

† An allusion to the appointment of Canon Stanley to the Deanery of Westminster.

the sanctity of a long tradition, yet sympathizing with authority, and full of conciliation, even deference, to the civil power. Broadly and deeply planted in the land, mixed up with all our manners and customs, one of the main guarantees of our local government, and therefore one of the prime securities of our common liberties, the Church of England is part of our history, part of our life, part of England itself.

"It is said sometimes that the Church of England is hostile to religious liberty. As well might it be said that the monarchy of England is adverse to political freedom. Both are institutions which insure liberty by securing order. It is said sometimes that the church in this country has proved unequal to its mission, and has failed to secure the spiritual culture of the population. It is perfectly true that within the last fifty years there has been a vast and irregular increase of our population, with which the machinery of the church has been inadequate to cope. But the machinery of the church, in that respect, was incomplete only; it was not obsolete. It is said that the church has lost the great towns; unhappily the church has never found the great towns. They are her future, and it will be in the great towns that the greatest triumphs of the church will be achieved; for the greater the population and the higher the education of the people, the more they will require a refined worship, a learned theology, an independent priesthood, and a sanctuary hallowed by the associations of historic ages.

"Here, then, is a common ground on which, dismissing unsubstantial and illusory feelings of perplexity, distrust, and discontent, all sections and parties of churchmen may unite and act together in maintaining the religious settlement of this realm. Is it unnecessary? Can any one now pretend that the union between church and state in this country is not assailed and endangered? It is assailed in the chief place of the realm, its parliament; and it

is endangered in an assembly where, if churchmen were united, the church would be irresistible. Nothing can exceed the preparation, the perseverance, the ability, and, I will willingly admit, the conscience with which the assault upon the church is now conducted in the House of Commons. Churchmen would do wrong to treat lightly these efforts, because they believe that they are only the action of a minority in the country. The history of success is the history of minorities. During the last session of parliament alone a series of bills was introduced, all with various specific objects, but all converging to the same point—an attack upon the authority of the church and the most precious privileges of churchmen. Our charities are assailed; even our churchyards are invaded; our law of marriage is to be altered; our public worship, to use the language of our opponents, is to be 'facilitated.' Finally, the sacred fabrics of the church are no longer to be considered national. It is true that all these efforts were defeated. But how defeated? By a strain upon the vigilance and energy of those who repelled the attack, which cannot be counted on hereafter, unless churchmen, and the country generally, come forward to assist us."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the contested question as to the maintenance or abolition of church-rates. "My opinions on church-rates are well known," he continued. "I hold that the carrying of a measure for the total and unconditional abolition of church-rates would be a signal blow to the alliance between church and state, and that under no conceivable circumstances—at least, under no circumstances that I can conceive—should it be conceded. But there is a general opinion that legislation on the subject of church-rates is necessary and desirable, and that, without any relinquishment of principle, the law may be improved and adapted to existing circumstances. Be it so; only this I would venture to impress most earnestly on all churchmen who may be present—and perhaps I may presume to

say, on some who are not here—that if there is to be legislation on church-rates, none can be satisfactory which is not introduced with the authority of Her Majesty's government. Sure I am that no member of parliament, whether he sits in the Lords or the Commons, can with his own resources and on his own responsibility succeed in such an enterprise. It would lead only to renewed defeat and increased disaster. The subject is at present in that position that the government of this country is most happily placed in regard to it, if it wishes to legislate. One-half of the House of Commons sitting opposite to them will support any just measure, waiving any points of difference on matters of detail among themselves; and therefore it is in the power of the government to secure a large majority on the subject. I think myself, on the whole, that it is now their duty to deal with it. The question of church-rates is the great domestic question of the day, and it ought not to be left in the position which it now occupies, after what has occurred in the two houses of parliament of late years. The very fact that opinion in the House of Commons as against the government is equally divided, and that in the other house of parliament there is an overwhelming majority against any rash and unconditional change, indicates that it is the duty of those who are responsible for the good government of the country to come forward, and with all the authority of an administration to offer their opinion on the question and to act upon it.

"I would venture, my lord bishop, to ask your permission to offer one observation on this subject, which I hope those churchmen who minister to us in things sacred will not think presumptuous. I am myself, I need hardly say, in public life a party man. I am not unaware of the errors and excesses which occasionally occur in party conflicts, but I have a profound conviction that in this country the best security for purity of government and for public liberty is to be found in the organized emulation of public

men. Nevertheless, I have ever impressed on my clerical friends the wisdom of the utmost reserve on their part with regard to mere political questions. Not that I doubt their right to entertain opinions on all public questions, and to act upon them. An English clergyman is an English gentleman and an English citizen. But I have always felt that in proportion to their political activity will the integrity of their spiritual and social influence be diminished; and I think that influence of far greater importance than their political activity. But there is a limit to this reserve. What I would presume to recommend is this:—When institutions are in question, and not individuals, the clergy ought to interfere; and when, of all institutions, that to which they are specially devoted, and on which their daily thoughts and nightly meditations should be fixed, is at stake, their utmost vigilance and determination should be summoned. When the interests of the church, of which they are the sacred ministers, are concerned, the clergy would be guilty of indefensible apathy if they remained silent and idle. The clergy of the Church of England have at this moment one of the greatest and most glorious opportunities for accomplishing a great public service that was probably ever offered to any body of public men. It is in their power to determine and to insure that church questions in this country shall no longer be party questions. They, and they alone, can effect this immense result, and that by a simple process—I mean by being united. Let them upon general public affairs entertain that which I trust they always will entertain as free Englishmen, their own general opinions. Let them be banded in the two great historical parties in the state, Whig or Tory. It would be a very unfortunate thing for this country, if in any great body of respectable men there should ever cease to be such differences of political opinion. But let them say that church questions are not questions which they will permit to enter the province of

political party. If the clergy are united in that determination, rest assured that the laity will soon become united too, and we shall be spared hereafter the frightful anomaly of seeing conscientious churchmen recording their votes and exerting their influence against the church. Depend upon it that nothing in this country can resist churchmen when united; and if they are only united on church questions, they will add immensely to the strength of good government and to the general welfare of the people. Then I believe that these admirable institutions, the object of which is to ameliorate the whole body of society, will assume that character in their action which is so devoutly to be desired; then the great aims of the church, the education of the people, their perfect spiritual supervision, the completion of our parochial system, and above all, the free and decorous worship of the Almighty, will be securely effected."

Before the end of the year a terrible blow fell upon the nation, and saddened all who were preparing to enter into the festivities of Christmas. At midnight on the Saturday of December 14, 1861, the great bell of St. Paul's sent forth its loud and lugubrious peals upon the silence of a hushed and sleeping city. Prince Albert, the great and the good, whom certain critics maligned in his life-time only to find at a later period how hard and unjust had been their strictures, had fallen a victim to a somewhat sudden attack of fever. He had been seized with cold and aguish symptoms, but it was not until the third day of his illness that either the court or the country began to experience any grave anxiety at his condition. From that date, however, his decline was rapid, his vital power became daily weaker; and on congestion of the lungs, the result of complete exhaustion, setting in, he sank without pain, and was conscious to the last. We are only now beginning to know how severe was the loss both the throne and the nation suffered by the death of the Prince Consort. A man

who wore the white flower of a blameless life, he set the court an example of purity of conduct such as it had never witnessed since the accession of the Hanoverian house. He interested himself in all matters calculated to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the nation of his adoption. His mind was singularly clear; and the deductions he arrived at from his firm and complete grasp of public affairs were almost always sound and accurate. That one so gifted with the prescience and the capacity which mark the man who is born to guide and control, should have interfered so seldom in the conduct of public affairs is the best proof we have of his high moral worth and noble self-abnegation. Pure of life, a splendid example of behaviour amid great temptations and under somewhat trying circumstances, endowed with intellectual powers of no ordinary calibre, a man noble, disinterested, and prudently energetic, he passed into the tomb honoured and regretted by all; and as the records of his past life become more and more patent, so will the more his name and memory be held in esteem and veneration. Of all the men who have wielded the sceptre of English rule, or who have been closely allied to the throne, he alone deserves to be called "the Good."

"It has been said," remarked Mr. Disraeli (February 6, 1862) in the funeral oration he delivered upon the Prince Consort at the conclusion of his speech on the address to the throne, "it has been said that there is nothing which England so much appreciates as the fulfilment of duty. The prince whom we have lost not only was eminent for the fulfilment of duty, but it was the fulfilment of the highest duty under the most difficult circumstances. Prince Albert was the consort of his sovereign; he was the father of one who might be his sovereign; he was the prime councillor of a realm, the political constitution of which did not even recognize his political existence. Yet under these circumstances, so difficult and so delicate, he elevated even the throne by the dignity

and purity of his domestic life. He framed and partly accomplished a scheme of education for the heir of England which proved how completely its august projector had contemplated the office of an English king. In the affairs of state, while his serene spirit and his elevated position bore him above all the possible bias of our party life, he showed on every occasion all the resources, all the prudence, all the sagacity of an experienced and responsible statesman.

"Sir, I have presumed to touch upon three instances in which there was on the part of Prince Albert a fulfilment of duty—duty of the highest character, under circumstances of the greatest difficulty. I will venture to touch upon another point in his character equally distinguished by fulfilment of duty, but in which the duty was not only fulfilled, but was created. Although when he was adopted by this country he was, after all, but a youth of tender years, such was the character of his mind—at once observing and contemplative—that in due season he discovered that, notwithstanding all those great achievements which long centuries of internal concord and public liberty had permitted the energy and enterprise of Englishmen to achieve, there was still a great deficiency in our national character, which, if neglected, might lead to the impairing not only of our social happiness, but even of the sources of our public wealth. That was a deficiency of culture. But he was not satisfied with detecting a want, he resolved to supply it. His plans were deeply laid; they were maturely prepared; and notwithstanding the obstacles which he inevitably encountered, I am prepared to say they were eminently successful. What might have been his lot had his term completed that which is ordained as the average life of man, it might be presumption to predict. Perhaps he would have impressed upon his age not only his character, but his name. But this, at least, posterity must admit, that he heightened the intellectual and moral standard of this country; that he extended and expanded the

sympathies of classes; and that he most beneficially and intimately adapted to the productive powers of England the inexhaustible resources of science and art.

"Sir, it is sometimes deplored by those who admired and loved him, that he was thwarted occasionally in his undertakings, and that he was not duly appreciated. But these are not circumstances for regret, but for congratulation. They prove the leading and original mind which has so long and so advantageously laboured for this country. Had he not encountered these obstacles, had he not been subject to this occasional distrust and misconception, it would only have shown that he was a man of ordinary mould and temper. Those who improve must change, those who change must necessarily disturb and alarm men's prejudices. What he had to encounter was only a demonstration that he was a man superior to his age, and therefore admirably adapted for the work of progress.

"There is one other point, and one only, on which I will presume for a moment to dwell, and it is not for the sake of you, sir, or those who now hear me, or of the generation to which we belong, but it is that those who come after us may not misunderstand the nature of this illustrious man. Prince Albert was not a mere patron; he was not one of those who by their gold or by their smiles reward excellence or stimulate exertion. His contributions to the cause of state were far more powerful and far more precious. He gave to it his thought, his time, his toil; he gave to it his life. On both sides and in all parts of the House I see many gentlemen who occasionally have acted with the Prince at those council boards, where they conferred and consulted upon the great undertakings with which he was connected. I ask them, without fear of a denial, whether he was not the leading spirit, whether his was not the mind which foresaw the difficulty, his not the resources which supplied the remedy; whether his was not the courage which sustained them under apparently overpowering difficulties;

whether every one who worked with him did not feel that he was the real originator of those plans of improvement which they assisted in carrying into effect.

"But what avail these words? This House to-night has been asked to condole with the crown upon this great calamity. No easy office. To condole, in general, is the office of those who, without the pale of sorrow, still feel for the sorrowing. But in this instance the country is as heart-stricken as its queen. Yet in the mutual sensibility of a sovereign and a people there is something ennobling—something which elevates the spirit beyond the level of mere earthly sorrow. The counties, the cities, and the corporations of the realm—those illustrious associations of learning and science, and art and skill, of which he was the brightest ornament and the inspiring spirit, have bowed before the throne. It does not become the parliament of the country to be silent. The expression of our feelings may be late, but even in that lateness may be observed some propriety. To-night the two Houses sanction the expression of the public sorrow, and ratify, as it were, the record of a nation's woe."

The new year opened amid much gloom and depression. Trade was bad; the civil war in America created considerable distress in the cotton districts of Lancashire; and as yet the decision of the government at Washington concerning the *Trent* affair had not reached London. Parliament was opened by commission February 6, 1862, and as was to be expected, tender reference was made to the affliction in which the queen was involved by the loss of the Prince Consort. "It has been, however," said the commissioners, "soothing to Her Majesty, while suffering most acutely under this awful dispensation of Providence, to receive from all classes of her subjects the most cordial assurance of their sympathy with her sorrow, as well as their appreciation of the noble character of him, the greatness of whose loss to Her Majesty and to the nation is so justly and so universally felt

and lamented." The speech also referred to the satisfactory settlement of the difference with the United States regarding the seizure of the Confederate commissioners, the news of which had been received within the last three weeks; and to the convention concluded with France for the purpose of obtaining from Mexico a redress for grievances inflicted on foreign residents within that country.* Measures were also promised relating to the improvement of the law.

On the meeting of the Houses, Mr Disraeli briefly commented upon the speech of the commissioners and the political situation of the hour. Although the general condition of affairs, he said, was one pregnant with anxiety, yet he hoped, with the exercise of vigilance and moderation in their councils, all perils and anxieties might be avoided. The march of events in America had been momentous. Nothing, however, had occurred so far to shake his conviction of the wisdom of the policy of neutrality which the English government had adopted. The conduct of ministers with respect to the matter of the

* A long series of injuries to British subjects and property in Mexico, for which no redress could be obtained, led to the withdrawal of the British legation from the city of Mexico. The civil war that had been raging there for the last three years, between the revolutionary party under Generals Zuloaga and Miramon and the constitutional government under President Juarez, was made the excuse for not complying with the British demands. In 1842 a convention was concluded by the British minister with the Mexican government, for the payment of certain claims, by virtue of which a fixed proportion of the entire customs revenue was mortgaged as a security for payment. No money, however, being paid, a sub-convention was concluded in 1852, for the fulfilment of these claims. Great difficulties arose in carrying out these conventions, while outrages of the most flagrant kind continued to take place both to the persons and property of British subjects. In April Sir C. Lennox Wyke was sent as a special envoy to Mexico, but all his efforts were abortive, and it was necessary to resort to sterner means of compulsion. The governments of France and Spain had also serious grounds of complaint against the Mexican government, for wrongs and outrages inflicted on their subjects; accordingly the above convention was signed. It resolved to despatch combined naval and military forces, of sufficient strength to seize and occupy the several fortresses and military positions on the Mexican coast. The contracting parties were not to seek any acquisition of territory, nor to exercise in the internal affairs of Mexico any influence of a nature to prejudice the right of the Mexican nation to choose the form of its government. A commissioner was to be named by each of the contracting parties, to determine all questions regarding the application or distribution of money which might be recovered from Mexico.

Trent had been prompt, firm, and moderate, and he was bound in fairness to admit that the reparation America had offered had been influenced by sentiments as worthy. "When I consider," he said with that chivalrous generosity which was always so conspicuous in his character, and which is so wanting in his great rival, "when I consider the great difficulties which the statesmen of North America have to encounter, when I consider what I may call the awful emergency which they have been summoned suddenly to meet, and which without giving any opinion upon the cause of these transactions, I would venture to say they have met manfully and courageously, I think it becomes England in dealing with the government of the United States, to extend to all which they say at least a generous interpretation, and to their acts a liberal construction."

At the same time, he admitted, England had also a right to expect from the government of the United States that they should take no perverse view of the conduct of ministers in this country. England was now neutral, but how long such neutrality would last time alone could show. In an instance of intestine dissension, a neutral power must contemplate a term to such disorders; but whether that term should be accomplished by vindicating the authority of the legitimate government or by recognizing the existence of the insurrectionary power, was an event which time and circumstances alone could settle. All that the government of the United States had a right to expect was that England would take no steps in a precipitate spirit; and he therefore suggested that all information in the possession of the government with respect to the blockade of the Southern ports should be laid before the House. Mr. Disraeli concluded by pressing upon the government and the country that the expedition to Mexico should not be rashly undertaken, and then delivered the eulogium upon the late Prince Consort which we have already given.

The chief feature of this somewhat uneventful session was the financial statement

laid before the House by the chancellor of the exchequer. A large surplus had not been expected. The civil war in America was now beginning to act prejudicially upon our commercial interests; and if it had not been for the counterbalancing influence of the treaty with France, trade prospects in this country would have had but a sorry outlook. During the first quarter of the year our exports to the United States had fallen from £21,667,000 to £9,058,000, being a difference of no less than £12,609,000. On the other hand, our trade with France had increased within the period of a single year from £2,190,000 to £6,910,000. Still financial matters were not highly encouraging; numbers of men were out of work, the importation of cotton from America had almost ceased, and loud were the cries for relief from famished Wigan, Blackburn, and Preston. The crops in the last harvest had partially failed, and the nation had to settle various important little bills consequent upon an increase in our naval and military expenditure. Under these circumstances, it was not anticipated that Mr. Gladstone would have a large sum at his disposal to remit taxation and redress financial grievances. Nor were these expectations disproved when the budget came before the House; indeed matters were worse than had been anticipated. On making up the national account, Mr. Gladstone found that practically there was no surplus at his disposal.* Under these circumstances, and

* The following were the chief features in this budget:—The expenditure of the last year had been estimated at £69,875,000; but in addition there had been supplementary grants to the amount of £1,499,000, which brought up the total estimated expenditure to £71,374,000. The actual expenditure of the year was £70,838,000, being £536,000 less than the total estimated expenditure. Compared with the year 1860-61, the expenditure of which was £72,504,000, the decrease in 1861-62 was £166,000. The revenue of the past year amounted to £69,674,000, leaving a deficiency of revenue to meet the expenditure of £1,164,000. Deducting this sum from the amount of the supplemental grants, £1,499,000, there resulted a surplus of £335,000. The expenditure for the coming year, 1862-63, was estimated at £70,040,000, and the revenue at £70,190,000, leaving a surplus of £150,000. Mr. Gladstone was careful to state that comparing the revenue of the last year with that of 1861-62, the country had parted with three important sources of revenue, by which a loss of £2,637,000 had been entailed.

with the civil war in America likely to continue, the chancellor of the exchequer was unable to attempt any brilliant financial operations. He contented himself therefore with making a few changes in the incidence of taxation, such as the replacement of the duties on hops by an increase of brewers' licenses, a lowering of the duty on hops, and a modification of the wine duties.

Such a balance-sheet did not fail to encounter opposition; and it was warmly assailed by Mr. Disraeli in a critical and combative speech (April 7, 1862). They were commencing the year, he said, without a surplus, and under circumstances which could not be justified. Their trade was not increasing, their revenue was declining, and the state of affairs in America and Europe was not encouraging. It was therefore much to be regretted that the financial year should commence with only a nominal surplus. Why was there not a surplus? was on the lips of every one in the country. Had the paper duty been retained there would have been a surplus of nearly £1,500,000; the repeal of that duty had been opposed on two grounds—because there was no real surplus, and because owing to the civil war in America it was more than probable that there would have to be an increase in the naval and military expenditure of the country. The result had been that the civil war had created an increase in the national expenditure exceeding the amount of the paper duty. Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to criticise Mr. Gladstone's various financial statements, proving that his estimates were fallacious, that he had anticipated the resources of the country, and that his expenditure had been grossly extravagant. The chancellor of the exchequer, he said, had sustained the revenue by war-duties, he had supplied his deficits by reckless draughts upon the balances of the exchequer, and he had increased the public debt.

"Well, sir," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "having placed clearly before the House

and the country our exact financial position—our deficits, our anticipated resources, and the prospects before us—I say that I have shown that the three excuses which were offered by the right hon. gentleman to account for and extenuate his errors and calm the public mind, very naturally agitated after such a revelation, are utterly flimsy; the expenditure is not exceptional, the debt has not been reduced, retrenchment has not been effected. What if there be a continued decline of the revenue? What if there be that which the right hon. gentleman contemplates—a great increase in the employment of the people? What if there be that which every gentleman in this House on either side contemplates as more than possible—critical circumstances occurring either in America or Europe which may call for increased expenditure—where are we? Where is our surplus to fall back upon? The abolition of the paper duty was wrung from a reluctant House of Commons, and in defiance of the solemn vote of the other house of parliament. Whatever may be the folly of ministers, history may vindicate the wisdom of parliament. But, sir, there is a point more alarming even than increased taxation, or than even that account of his financial disasters which could no longer be concealed. The whole speech of the right hon. gentleman, where he referred to taxation, seemed based on this principle—that the income tax was to be a permanent feature of our financial system. The right hon. gentleman referred to half a dozen other taxes which he could not yet repeal, and to some which he could only soften. The whole tenor of the discourse of the right hon. gentleman was, that the income tax was to be a permanent feature of our financial system. Is that the opinion of the House of Commons? Is that the opinion of the country? I reiterate the views that I have myself often expressed. I do not believe that the income tax in its present form can be a permanent tax. Although I have listened to every suggestion

that has been made, and weighed them, I trust, with patience and without partiality, I have listened to no scientific solution of the difficulties connected with that tax that would be satisfactory to the treasury of Her Majesty. The tax remains unequal, unjust, inquisitorial, and branded with that character of infamy which the right hon. gentleman himself in 1853, with such profuse expression, gave to it, and which he made the basis of his most considerable financial measure and his most fallacious.*

"Sir, I think we have a right to expect from the right hon. gentleman that he should speak frankly on this subject of the income tax. He has no right to fritter away the resources of the country, and leave that tax pressing upon it. Sir, there is something in the speeches of the right hon. gentleman on this head, and generally on all matters of finance—it is of common custom with him, and I feel it my duty now to notice it—which fills me with perplexity, which I think conveys to the country a sentiment not merely of perplexity, but of distrust; and it is this, that while the right hon. gentleman is without exception the most profuse minister that ever administered the affairs of this country in peace, he is perpetually insinuating—to use the mildest term—to the House and the country that he disapproves of that expenditure, and is burning to denounce it. Now, that is not a legitimate position for the right hon. gentleman to occupy. If he disapproves of this profuse expenditure, why does he sit upon that bench, and lend to its enactment and enforcement all the authority

of his character and all the lustre of his reputation? If, on the contrary, he approves of that expenditure, then it is his duty as finance minister especially, not to dispirit and discontent the people, but rather to animate them under inevitable burdens, and sustain their courage at a time when he perhaps might have to call upon them with renewed appeals. But nothing of the kind; the right hon. gentleman never proposes a vote—and it falls to him to propose the most profuse votes that any minister in time of peace ever brought forward—he never does this without an intimation that he does not sanction in his heart the expenditure he recommends. But the right hon. gentleman has gained the confidence and support of a party in this House, not yet very numerous in point of number, but distinguished by talent and perseverance—the party who are for the reduction of our establishments. How is it that that party who preach retrenchment and reduction—who believe all our estimates, especially the naval and military estimates, are much too extravagant, who are opposed to fortifications, and who do not much like iron ships—how is it that this party always support a minister who is bringing forward these excessive estimates and who provides for this enormous expenditure?

"Well, that is a great question. This, at least, we know—that while the spendthrift is weeping over pence, while this penurious prodigal is proposing this enormous expenditure, he always contrives to repeal some tax to gratify the interests or prejudices of the party of retrenchment. No wonder, then, we hear no longer the same character of the income tax. No wonder we are no longer reminded of that compact entered into by the House and accepted by the country for its gradual and permanent abolition. Unless the House expresses on a fitting occasion its opinion, there is very little hope of our obtaining any redress in this respect. Well, sir, who will deny that this position

* "If the committee have followed me, they will see that we stand on the principle that the income tax ought to be marked as a temporary measure; that the public feeling that relief should be given to intelligence and skill, as compared with property, ought to be met, and may be met; that the income tax in its operation ought to be mitigated by every rational means compatible with its integrity; and, above all, that it should be associated in the last terms of its existence, as it was in its first, with those remissions of indirect taxation which have so greatly redounded to the profit of this country, and have set so admirable an example—an example that has already in some quarters proved contagious—to the other nations of the earth."—*Mr. Gladstone House of Commons, April 18, 1853.*

of affairs is peculiar and perilous? I remember some years ago, when the right hon. gentleman was at the head of a small and select party of politicians, not then absorbed in the gulf of Liberalism, that we heard much prattle about political morality. What then most distinguished the right hon. gentleman and his friends was their monopoly of that admirable quality. They were perpetually thanking God that they were not as other men, and always pointing their fingers at those unfortunate wights who sat opposite to them. Now we see the end of 'political morality.' We see the position to which 'political morality' has brought the finances of a great nation. I denounce this system as one detrimental to the character of public men, and most injurious to the fortunes of the realm."

So much praise has been lavished upon the lucid and skilful manner in which Mr. Gladstone manipulated his earlier budgets that it sounds like treason to call in question, not their brilliancy, but their soundness. Yet there can be little doubt that the financial policy of Mr. Gladstone at this period was far from deserving the reputation it gained. Fortunately for him, however, the mistakes were concealed by the dazzle of his eloquence. "A great rhetorician," said Mr. Disraeli, "when he makes a comprehensive statement, may so charm his audience that when they are leaving the House they may be utterly ignorant as to whether a surplus or a deficiency really exists. But in the sober hour that follows the financial flourishes, there is a power of appeal to documents, the accuracy of which cannot be impugned, and from which we can draw conclusions which no one can for a moment hesitate to accept." And the sober hour that followed the financial flourishes of Mr. Gladstone showed how superficial and erroneous were many of his statements. Mr. Gladstone had asserted that throughout the whole period of his financial policy the growth of the revenue and the growth of public prosperity had been due to remis-

sions of taxation; yet it was proved that in other countries, where there had been no remissions of taxation and no new commercial policy, the increase of prosperity had been more rapid than in England. Between the years 1846 and 1856 the exports had increased only 96 per cent.; whilst in Austria they had increased 124, and in France 159 per cent.—thus showing that the increase of wealth, which not only England but other nations had enjoyed for the last fifteen years, must be attributed to another cause than a revised commercial policy. Again, during the last eight years, there had only been two years in which there had been a surplus, whilst the deficiency during that period was nearly thirty-four millions. Since the beginning of the Crimean war there had been an addition of nearly thirty-two millions to the capital of the national debt, and an increase of almost a million in the annual charge. Then Mr. Gladstone had also taken an unsound and one-sided view of the success which had attended upon the commercial treaty with France. He had raised the income tax from 5*d.* to 9*d.*, and had thus gained an additional four millions. "By the help of that four millions," said Lord Robert Cecil, "Mr. Gladstone no doubt enabled a large number of persons to set up a profitable trade, and those persons very naturally were loud in their panegyrics of the success of his commercial policy, the French treaty. What Mr. Gladstone had done was this. He had said to all the holders of fixed incomes—to curates, clerks, farmers, and all who were not engaged in trading operations—'You shall pay 4*d.* in the pound more than you have paid me before, and with that money I will enable certain estimable people in a great number of the commercial towns of England to open trade which they would never have been able to do before.'" If money was taken from one interest and given to another, the latter would of course be very prosperous, and that was all that Mr. Gladstone's commercial policy had achieved. The sounder class of economists,

and they sat chiefly on the Conservative benches, were on the whole not unjustified in declaring that they viewed the system of finance adopted by Mr. Gladstone with fear and distrust.

Once more the question of the abolition of church-rates, which had been defeated last session by the casting vote of the Speaker, came before the House, and was again rejected, though by the narrowest majority that victory could possibly obtain. The debate on the second reading took place May 14, 1862, when Mr. Disraeli offered a few remarks.

"The question," he said, "had occupied the attention of parliament for nearly thirty years, and though twenty-three schemes had been brought forward for its solution, the matter was still unsettled. And why? Because the question was not ripe for legislation, and the country did not really require it to be dealt with. No doubt, when they were dealing with an ancient law and an ancient custom, there must be many abuses which might be removed, and many improvements of which it was susceptible. So it might be said of the question of church-rates. Doubtless in the appropriation of the sums levied by church-rates there were appropriations which could not be altogether justified, and in other cases appropriations which were of too limited and exclusive a character. But who could suppose that if those were the abuses and grievances which required a remedy, the House of Commons, the most practical assembly in the world, would have wasted thirty hours, and made twenty-three legislative experiments, and yet never advanced a single jot towards the solution of the difficulty? The question could only be settled by the government taking it in hand. It was not a clerical question, but a popular question, since it involved the public rights of the people. It was not to be decided by the weight of the opinion of prelates, but by statesmen. They had at stake some of the greatest objects, and some of the most important principles which

could engage the attention of Englishmen. They had at stake the principle of an established church, the practice of local government, the right of self-taxation, and the hereditary privileges of the great mass of the population. That leads us," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "to the mode in which this church-rate has really been levied. It has been levied by popular election. It has been imposed by the popular voice, expressed in the ancient and constitutional manner of this country by a majority. Why, the principle of ruling by a majority is the moving spring of our social and political life, and upon it the remarkable order of this country mainly depends. Why, if it is a grievance for a minority in a parish to submit to a majority, under what grievance does a member of the minority of a constituency labour who sees returned to this House a gentleman who is in mockery called his representative, with whom he does not agree upon any single public question, and who is passing all his time in opposing those views and principles which the unhappy constituent advocates? Why might not he come to us and say—'Here is a political grievance which touches me every hour of my life, which makes me feel degraded and enslaved, and I ask for some relief in these particulars. This monstrous proposition that my borough is to be represented by the opinion of the majority is, in fact, an obstacle to all sound principles of government; and if this rule of a majority is adhered to, those ideas, which I am convinced are the only ones upon which beneficial legislation can rest, will not have the slightest chance of successful assertion.' What would you say to a person who addressed you in that manner? You would say—'All this may be very well; but the fact is society could not be carried on upon your principles.'"

On a division the supporters of church-rates triumphed; Ayes, 286; Noes, 287—majority, 1.

The condition of the finances of the country was viewed, as we have seen,

by the Conservative party with distrust. Owing to the fears, chiefly excited by Lord Palmerston, that there was a prospect of an invasion by France, large sums had been spent upon fortifying our coasts, upon the construction of iron ships, which had now become a prominent feature in our nautical armament, and upon other defences of the country. It was felt both by Conservatives and by certain Liberals that the occasion did not justify this lavish outlay, that the country was well supplied with means of defence, and that the money granted by the House of Commons could be expended more beneficially in the remission of taxation than in keeping our armaments at a war level. Upon the motion of Mr. Stansfeld, "that, in the opinion of this House, the national expenditure is capable of reduction without compromising the safety, the independence, or the legitimate influence of the country," Mr. Disraeli made use of it as a means to attack the government upon its extravagance. Ever since the date of the treaty of Zurich Mr. Disraeli had been urging upon the government "to counsel disarmament by France, and for the general exercise of our influence for reduction on that subject;" and he now complained that his advice had been neglected.

The home defences, he said (June 3, 1862), considering the House had been ten years engaged upon them, were now perfectly sufficient for the object they had in view, and it was needless to expend further sums upon them. The militia had been embodied, the channel fleet had been established, the volunteer system had sprung up, and the country had the regular troops armed with Enfield rifles, and the artillery provided with Armstrong guns. In short, they had at home a force of nearly 400,000 men disciplined and used to arms. "I say," said the leader of the Opposition, eulogizing, as he always did, the courage and loyalty of the English nation, "I say it is a monstrous mistake for a moment to suppose that this

country is not adequately defended; and I say that there is no country in the world, so far as artificial arrangements are concerned, more secure than England. And what is this country that you have so properly guarded and protected? Is it a country without any spirit of its own? Is it like some other countries where the government is mere police, where there is no public opinion, no public spirit, nothing of the inspiration of ancient freedom, no strength and resources but those of the government itself? Why, sir, that minister is unworthy of governing this country, who forgets for a moment that the people of England are the most enthusiastic people in the world. There are more excitable people to be met with—the French, for example, are far more excitable; but there is no people so enthusiastic as the English, as they have shown, among other instances, in this very question of national defence. To say of this country, protected by 400,000 men and a commanding fleet in the channel, that we are in danger of midnight invasion from cordial allies is a mystification too monstrous for belief."

Mr. Disraeli then showed that as at home we were well defended, so in all our principal stations throughout the world we were represented by an adequate armed force. Our foreign garrisons were efficient, our fortifications strong, our armaments complete, our troops numerous, and in our great naval stations—the Mediterranean and the West Indies—we had commanding fleets which secured the supremacy of the sea. Why then, he asked, spend any more sums, why increase the national expenditure by making unnecessarily efficient what was already perfectly satisfactory? Why expend a large amount on our naval and military establishments for purposes which were not necessary for the security of our shores, and for the protection of our interests and influence abroad? Nothing, he cried, justified such extravagant and extraordinary expenditure. Europe was tranquil because she was exhausted and embarrassed.

Where was Austrian finance? Where was Russian finance? What was the financial condition of that imperial France who was thrown in their face as a bugbear on all occasions? Why, during the last fifteen years, Europe had been in arms, and she was now consequently exhausted and impoverished. These were times for economy and retrenchment, not for increased armaments and extravagance. It was idle to lament over the expenditure of the past, but with continuous deficits it behoved England to be careful as to the future. What the government ought now to do, he suggested, was to make such reductions as would equalize the charge and revenue of the country, and the policy intimated should be a diminution in the war taxation which, used in time of peace, was sapping and wasting their financial reserve—that reserve which was the secret source of their influence with foreign nations, and the best security for their prosperity at home.

To the resolution of Mr. Stansfeld the following amendment had been proposed by Lord Palmerston:—"That this House, deeply impressed with the necessity of economy in every department of the state, is at the same time mindful of its obligation to provide for the security of the country at home and the protection of its interests abroad: That this House observes with satisfaction the decrease which has already been effected in the national expenditure, and trusts that such further diminution may be made therein as the future state of things may warrant." To Lord Palmerston's substitute Mr. Walpole had proposed this amendment, "and trusts that the attention of the government will be earnestly directed to the accomplishment of such farther reduction, due regard being had to the defence of the country, as may not only equalize the revenue and the expenditure, but may also afford the means of diminishing the burden of those taxes which are confessedly of a temporary and exceptional character." At a meeting of the Opposition at Lord Derby's house, in St. James' Square, it had

been unanimously resolved to support the resolution of Mr. Walpole. Lord Palmerston, however, frustrated the tactics of the Opposition by treating Mr. Walpole's amendment as a vote of want of confidence. Mr. Walpole refused to engage in the discussion on these terms, and withdrew his amendment, causing Mr. Disraeli (it was on the eve of the Derby) to describe him as "a Derby favourite who had bolted." Mr. Stansfeld's resolution was rejected by 367 to 65, and that of Lord Palmerston was then carried without a division.

Before the session closed Mr. Disraeli availed himself of another opportunity to attack the financial policy of the chancellor of the exchequer, and further to expose his extravagance and shortcomings. Mr. Cobden, almost on the last day of the session, had passed in review the administration of affairs by the government of Lord Palmerston. His criticism was keen and not flattering. What were, he asked, the principles of the Liberal party? They were economy, non-intervention, and reform; and yet Lord Palmerston had acted throughout in defiance of those three great principles. His government had been the most extravagant the country had ever known in times of peace, and compared most unfavourably with the late Conservative ministry. The prime minister had dismissed the question of reform; and instead of non-intervention he had meddled in almost every quarter of the globe. "Taking into account," remarked the great apostle of free trade, "Lord Palmerston's Afghan wars, his Chinese wars, his Persian war, his expeditions here, there, and everywhere . . . the least I can put the noble lord down as having cost the country must be £100,000,000 sterling. I think," quietly observed Mr. Cobden, "the noble lord with all his merits is very dear at such a price."

To these strictures Lord Palmerston briefly replied. Reform, he said in his jaunty way, had not been dealt with because it was distasteful to the House of Commons and to the general feeling of the constituencies, and

because the proceedings of Mr. Bright had tended considerably to wean the people from the subject. He denied that his administration had been extravagant; and as to the views entertained by Mr. Cobden, they would not be supported by the country. Nor could he consider in any other light than as a compliment the censure of Mr. Cobden upon the foreign policy of the cabinet.

Then Mr. Disraeli rose, and he was in his most caustic vein. As the leading counsel, he began (August 1, 1862), in the great controversy between the Liberal party and the Reform government had stated their case, it would not perhaps be presumptuous on his part to exercise judicial authority, and offer some remarks by way of summing up on the merits of the question. He was not surprised at Mr. Cobden having felt it his duty to call the attention of the country to the relation that subsisted between the Liberal party and the government which they had created. He had expected some such criticism. As for himself he was content with the present position of the Liberal party. He had no desire whatever to interfere with that gradual, but at the same time sufficiently rapid process of decomposition and demoralization that he had long watched—the inevitable consequence of the circumstances and conditions under which the present administration had been formed, by the influence and authority and votes of that self-same Liberal party. The government had been formed for two purposes, most distinct and most direct. It was to pass a more democratic reform bill than had been proposed by its predecessors; and it was to extricate the country from the dangerous position in which its predecessors had placed it in relation to France. Those were most distinct conditions. And yet no reform bill of any kind had been carried. Why? because, sneered the prime minister, neither the House nor the country was particularly anxious for it.

"Is this the language," cried Mr. Disraeli, "we have a right to expect from a statesman of unprecedented experience, of one who is supposed not to act upon very grave matters but after due and deep reflection; a statesman, we assume, gifted with a fine observation of the temper of the times, and actuated by some sense of that responsibility which—though the House, as we are told to-night, may be broken up into fragments and manipulated by a dexterous parliamentary tactician—by a responsibility which I still hope influences the conduct of a British minister? Why, sir, what were the antecedents of the noble lord on this question of reform? A measure for the reconstruction of this House was brought forward by the late government, and it was opposed by the noble lord because it was not sufficiently comprehensive and sufficiently democratic. Animated by that conviction and influenced by that feeling, the noble lord felt himself authorized to counsel a course and join in a vote which he knew would lead to the dissolution of the existing parliament. Parliament was dissolved, the opinion of the country was given . . . and after that verdict of the country had been taken, after the dissolution which he had forced, after the public judgment of the people had been offered for his consideration, the noble lord entered into a confederacy, attending a public meeting in a public place, and made terms with the leaders of those convenient sections which are now to be managed in violation of the traditions and spirit of the English constitution, and there and then entered into an engagement to bring forward a more democratic reform bill than their predecessors whom he had defeated. And is it to be tolerated now that he should come forward with these jests, with this frivolous levity, and tell the parties whom he has deluded, and the people in the country whom he has disappointed, that, after such grave conduct, with such an opportunity of forming an opinion, he finds that neither the par-

liament which had just been elected, nor the people whom he had just left, really cared anything at all about parliamentary reform, and treats it as one of those manœuvres by which a minister who does not rule a party contrives to get a majority?"

Mr. Disraeli then turned to the policy of the government with regard to foreign affairs. The Conservatives had been turned out of office, because Lord Palmerston had declared that war with France was imminent in consequence of the short-sighted and prejudiced manner in which the interests of Austria had been upheld by the cabinet. Yet how, he asked, did Lord Palmerston act immediately upon being restored to power? "He rose in that seat," said Mr. Disraeli in tones of just indignation, "which he had gained by pledging himself to a measure of democratic reform—he rose in that seat and said that with regard to foreign policy the course of his government had been chalked out by their predecessors, and that course they intended to follow!"

So much for the reform bill, the rejection of which, laughed Mr. Disraeli, he for one certainly did not regret; and so much for the Liberal foreign policy! The next important question they had to consider was the state of the finances. "Are our finances," asked Mr. Disraeli, "in that state of prosperity or in that satisfactory condition, that we should reconcile ourselves to the government of the noble lord, even if he behaved so badly to his own party?" He thought not. Never since the year 1840 had the finances of England been in a more critical state. They had now what they had in 1840—two large and continuous deficits. They had begun the year without a surplus, and all that had since occurred went to prove that they must contemplate a third deficiency. The country had spent many millions without any compensation in the shape of an efficient expenditure and the results of that efficient expenditure. The money had been lavished on useless objects,

and shamefully wasted on unnecessary fortifications, on needless foreign expeditions, and on dockyards which showed no results. Such had been the Liberal policy; and yet what had been the policy of the Conservative party?

"I will at least say for the gentlemen who sit on this side of the House," answered Mr. Disraeli, "that the past session is a session upon which they have no reason as a party to look back with regret. We have, in the first place, this session, after long years of difficulty and sometimes almost of despair, triumphantly vindicated the status of the Church of England. There are few great things left, but among them is the church. We have done this in a manner, too, most satisfactory, because we have done it by parliamentary discipline—by parliamentary discipline founded on its only sure basis, sympathizing public opinion. I think we have done more. Ever since that period of disaster and dismay, when my friends and myself were asked for the first time to sit upon these benches, it has ever been our habit, in counselling the Tory party, to recur gradually but most sincerely to the original elements of that great political connection. To build up a community, not upon Liberal opinions, which any man may fashion to his fancy, but upon popular principles, which assert equal rights civil and religious; to uphold the institutions of the country because they are the embodiment of the wants and wishes of the nation and protect us alike from individual tyranny and popular outrage; equally to resist democracy and oligarchy, and favour that principle of free aristocracy which is the only basis and security for constitutional government; to be vigilant to guard and prompt to vindicate the honour of the country, but to hold aloof from that turbulent diplomacy which only distracts the mind of a people from internal improvement; to lighten taxation; frugally but wisely to administer the public treasure; to favour popular education, because it is the

best guarantee for public order; to defend local government and to be as jealous of the rights of the working man as of the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of the senate—these were once the principles which regulated Tory statesmen, and I for one have no wish that the Tory party should ever be in power unless they practise them."

Parliament was prorogued by commission a few days after this discussion. If the labours of the session had been arduous, their results were certainly not very apparent. The Houses were informed that the relations between England and the foreign powers were friendly and satisfactory; that Her Majesty, having resolved at the outset of the American civil war to take no part in the contest, had "seen no reason to depart from the neutrality to which she has steadily adhered;" and that a commercial treaty had been concluded with Belgium. The supplies had been liberal, and the dockyards and arsenals had been placed in a permanent state of defence. A treaty had been concluded with the president of the United States for the suppression of slavery; an Act for rendering more easy the transfer of land had been passed; and on the pages of the statute-book had also been enrolled statutes for the better regulation of parochial assessments, for the better administration of the highways, for establishing a uniformity of weights and measures, for amending the poor laws, and for the better regulation of merchant shipping. Mr. Cobden had not diverged far from the truth when he said that, to obtain these results it was hardly worth while to have upset a Conservative government.

Mr. Disraeli passed the autumn at Hughenden, and it was not until the close of the year that he again came prominently before the public. His action both in the House of Commons and in the country, as one of the most uncompromising opponents of the abolition of church-rates, had caused him to be regarded as the most valued

defender of the rights of the establishment that the national church then possessed. Of the Church of England Mr. Disraeli was always a staunch adherent. In his views of church discipline he was liberal and tolerant; but he was rigid in his interpretation of where the line of demarcation should be drawn. He agreed that a national church should be built on a broad basis, but he did not hold that its breadth should be of such a character as to be supported on one side by Deism and on the other by Romanism. The church might be broad, but it was to be distinctive. He could understand a man being a sceptic, a deist, or an agnostic; but he failed to understand either the honour or the logic of the Anglican divine who, whilst daily repeating the beautiful prayers of the Church of England and reading the appointed lessons, yet denied the inspiration of Holy Writ, threw doubts upon the Atonement, and gave to Plato a credence and a reverence which he denied to the Redeemer of mankind. Every man was at liberty to profess what form of faith he pleased; but if he enrolled himself as a member of the Church of England, he was in honour bound to accept her teaching and conform to her discipline. He could understand the position of the Catholic, and some of the most eloquent passages in his speeches and in his works are upon the power, the antiquity, and the ceremonial splendour of the Church of Rome; but he had scant sympathy with the mock priest and mischievous citizen who, forgetful of his ordination vows, sought to introduce a bastard superstition into the church he had solemnly vowed to maintain pure and uncorrupt; who with the diligence of the antiquary ferreted out obsolete observances which he pledged himself to uphold, whilst he calmly ignored what was patent in every rubric, obedience to his bishop; who, the pretended disciple of authority, passed his own laws and declined to admit the validity of any other legislation; who sneered at the civil power when it clashed with his own peculiar form of

discipline, yet eagerly claimed its assistance when it suited his purpose to avail himself of any advantage it might possess; and who, when at last made to suffer the lenient punishment of the law, posed before an admiring following of sickly women and shopkeepers' assistants as a martyr, smarting under the agonies of a Ridley or a Latimer for the faith. Such buffooneries Mr. Disraeli held in the contempt they deserved, and in his Public Worship Regulation Act he sought to restore uniformity to the national church, and to put down "mass in masquerade." But of the Church of England as by law established—in intimate union with the State, the church of the laity as well as of the clergy, her priests carrying out in all conscientiousness the law they had sworn to obey—Mr. Disraeli was a warm and fond disciple. He wished her to continue, pure and undefiled, working for the good of the nation, protected by the state, and in return making the state religious, as her founders had desired and decreed. There were few great things left, he said, but among them *was* the church.

Towards the end of the year (October 30, 1862), Mr. Disraeli addressed a large meeting held at High Wycombe, in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Society for the augmentation of small livings. He took this opportunity to express his views as to the future of the Church of England. He considered the remuneration offered to those who embraced holy orders as disgraceful, and as a grave reflection upon the nation. He touched upon the spoliation the church had suffered. He discussed the relations between the church and the country, and foretold the results which must ensue from a separation between church and state. He explained how the nationality of the church could be asserted, and what was the course to be pursued towards those not within her communion. He began by alluding to the poverty of the church, and we shall give his words, with but little excision or condensation, since they bear as much upon the condition of

the Church of England at the present day as upon her condition twenty years ago.

"It is not surprising," he said, "that the Church of England should be a poor church, because the church in this country has been despoiled. That is not a fate peculiar to the Church of England. Other churches, too, have been despoiled; but there is a peculiarity with regard to our church in this matter. In other countries, when the church has been deprived by the state of its property, at least that property has been applied to public and national purposes. That has not been the case of the church in England. The property of the church in England has been granted by despots and tyrants to their minions, and has been made the foundation and establishment of powerful families, who by virtue of that property, and not from any public services of their own, have had for generations a great portion of the government of this country, and of its power and patronage. Well, I find in these circumstances of aggravation in the case of the spoliation of the church in this country, compared with the spoliation of churches in other countries, circumstances of consolation and hope, because we live in an age when communities are governed by the influence of opinion; and when individuals are regulated in their conduct to a great degree by the influence of conscience, I cannot but believe that the estimable descendants of those original appropriators of church property, when they learn (and in a country of free discussion like the present they must now all of them be well informed upon that subject) that men of the highest education, who, from a sense of duty and devotion, dedicate their lives to comforting the people, receive for their labours stipends which even menials would refuse—I cannot but believe the estimable descendants of those original appropriators, in the satiety of their splendour, must feel an impulse that will make them apply a portion of that property, ages ago thus unjustly obtained, to purposes of a character which

society would recognize, and by its approbation reward."

Yet he felt there was little hope of any large action on the part of the class to which he had referred, or of any great exertion being made by the laity and the church generally, unless the church herself took a more definite and determined position than she had occupied during the last five-and-twenty years. "During that period," continued Mr. Disraeli, "there has been a degree of perplexity and of hesitation—I will say even of inconsistency—in the relations between the church and the nation, that has damped the ardour and depressed the energies of churchmen. I think it is not difficult to indicate the probable cause of that conduct; and it is only by ascertaining it that we can perhaps supply the remedy which may remove those injurious consequences. Society in this country is now established upon the principle of civil and religious liberty; and, in my opinion, it is impossible—and if possible, not desirable—to resist the complete development of that principle. At the same time, you have a church established by law, that is to say, a national church; and there is an apparent inconsistency in the principle which you have adopted as the foundation of your social system, and the existence of that established church; because the principle of civil and religious liberty has placed legislative power in the hands of great bodies of the people who are not in communion with that church, and they have used that power during the last five-and-twenty years, with caution at first, with much deliberation at first, but as time advanced, with more boldness and with more energy, till within the last few years they have made an avowed attack upon that church—an attack which they have conducted with great ability and with great courage. That being the case, you have what has occurred during the last quarter of a century; you have an apparent want of sympathy between that which, by the constitution, is the national church and a

great portion of the nation; a state of affairs which is to be highly deprecated.

"Twenty years ago, when this inconvenience was first generally felt, ardent churchmen, as sincere churchmen as ever lived, thought they had found a solution of this difficulty by terminating the union between church and state. They said, 'Terminate the union between church and state, as the whole of the nation is no longer in communion with the church, and you will put an end to the dissatisfaction that partially, but to a considerable degree, prevails.' That, no doubt, is a very plausible suggestion, and one that has been accepted by ingenious and able minds; but if it is examined into, it will be found one that may lead to results very different from those which are anticipated by the persons who are favourable to it, and results perhaps unsatisfactory and injurious to the country; because it cannot be supposed for a moment," said Mr. Disraeli, and the Ritualists would do well to take his words to heart, "that in this age the civil power will tolerate an *imperium in imperio*, and allow a great corporation, in possession of vast property—for the property is considerable, though, if distributed, it may not offer adequate compensation to those who are labouring in its service—to act in independence of the state. Therefore, there is no concealing it from ourselves that it would soon end in another spoliation, and the church would be left without the endowment of the estates which it at present possesses. The principles of divine truth, I admit, do not depend upon property; but the circulation of the principles of divine truth by human machinery depends upon property for its organization. And there is no doubt that, deprived of the means by which the divine instruction which it affords to the people is secured the church would of course lose immensely in its efficiency.

"But in the case of the Church of England," he continued, "it is not merely the question of the loss of its property,

but it is also a question of the peculiar character of that property. The property of the Church of England is territorial. It is so distributed throughout the country that it makes that church, from the very nature of its tenure, a national church; and the power of the Church of England does not depend merely on the amount of property it possesses, but in a very great degree on the character and kind of that property. Then, I say, the result would be that the church, deprived of its status, would become merely an episcopal sect in this country; and, in time, it is not impossible it might become an insignificant one. But that is not the whole, or perhaps even the greatest evil that might arise from the dissolution of the connection between church and state, because in the present age the art of government becomes every day more difficult, and no government will allow a principle so powerful as the religious principle to be divorced from the influences by which it regulates the affairs of a country. What would happen? Why, it is very obvious what would happen. The state of England would take care, after the church was spoiled, to enlist in its service what are called the ministers of all religions. The ministers of all religions would be salaried by the state, and the consequences of the dissolution of the alliance between church and state would be one equally disastrous to the churchman and to the nonconformist. It would place the ministers of all spiritual influences under the control of the civil power, and it would in reality effect a revolution in the national character. In my opinion, it would have even a most injurious effect upon the liberties of the country; and I cannot believe that after the thought and discussion that have been devoted to the subject for now the twenty years since it was first mooted by ardent and sincere men, I cannot believe there can be among those who have well considered it, any great difference of opinion, but that all men—I would say the churchman, the dissenter, the philosopher

—would shrink from a solution of the difficulty by such means.

“Well, then, what would you do? I maintain that you have only one alternative; that if you do not favour a dissolution of the union of church and state, you must assert the nationality of the Church of England. I know it will be said, ‘Assert the nationality of the church in a nation where there are millions not in communion with the church?’ These are words easy to use; but practically, what would be the consequence of a mere phrase? Well, I think that is a point worthy of some grave consideration; and in the first place it is expedient to ascertain, What is the character of those—I will acknowledge it—millions who are not in communion with the church? They consist of two classes. They consist of those who dissent from the church, and of those who are indifferent to the church; but these classes are very unequally divided.

“Now, the history of English dissent will always be a memorable chapter in the history of the country. It displays many of those virtues—I would say most of those virtues—for which the English character is distinguished—earnestness, courage, devotion, conscience; but one thing is quite clear, that in the present day the causes which originally created dissent no longer exist; while, which is of still more importance, there are now causes in existence opposed to the spread of dissent. I will not refer to the fact that many, I believe the great majority, of the families of the descendants of the original Puritans and Presbyterians have merged in the Church of England itself; but no man can any longer conceal from himself that the tendency of this age is, not that all creeds and churches and consistories should combine—I do not say *that*, mind—but I do say, that the tendency of the present age is that all churches, creeds, and consistories should cease hereafter from any internecine hostility. That is a tendency which it is impossible for

them to resist; and therefore, so far as the spread of dissent, of mere sincere religious dissent, is concerned, I hold that it is of a very limited character, and there is nothing in the existence of it which should prevent the Church of England from asserting her nationality. For observe, the same difficulties that are experienced by the church are also experienced by the dissenters, without the advantage which the church possesses in her discipline, learning, and tradition.

"But I come now to the more important consideration; I come to the second division of the English population that is not in communion with the Church of England. And here I acknowledge that at first the difficulty seems great, because here you do count them by millions; but, in the first place, observe that these are not dissenters from the church; these are not millions who have quitted the church. There are great masses of the population who have never yet entered into communion with the Church of England. The late archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Sumner), a most amiable and pious man, and by no means deficient in observation of the times, passed many of his last years in anxious perplexity about the anomalous position of that national church of which he was the primate. I was a member of a committee formed of members of the two houses of parliament, who had to confer together upon the conduct to be pursued in the Houses of Lords and Commons by the friends of the church, upon some momentous questions in which the interests and the character of the church were concerned. The archbishop of Canterbury was our chairman, and in every instance when we had to confer together, the late archbishop always counselled surrender, and surrender without conditions. Fortunately, there were other opinions upon that committee, and I am glad to say, that in every instance the late archbishop of Canterbury was outvoted. It so happened that in all these cases, when they were brought before the

houses of parliament for decision, it was proved that the opinion of the archbishop had been erroneous, and that he had miscalculated the feeling in favour of the church which existed in the country, because the decision of the houses of parliament, and especially the House of Commons, is only a reflection upon such subjects of the feeling of the country. The year before the archbishop died, he did me the honour of seeking a conversation with me, and the object of that conversation was to explain the course he had taken with regard to these questions, in which he admitted that, so far as recent occurrences were concerned, he had been mistaken; but he said, 'Although I may have formed an erroneous judgment, and although I admit you and your friends were right in your view of the case, still I went upon a great fact. My conduct was based upon a great fact, which no one can deny, and it is this—No one can deny that the population has outgrown the church.' No one can deny that. I do not deny it; but I draw from that fact a conclusion exactly opposite to that of the late archbishop of Canterbury. My inference is the very reverse of the one which he drew, and the conduct which he consequently recommended.

"If, indeed, the Church of England were in the same state as the pagan religion was in the time of Constantine; if her altars were paling before the divine splendour of inspired shrines, it might be well, indeed, for the church and for the ministers of the church, to consider the course that they should pursue; but nothing of the kind is the case. You have to deal, so far as regards the millions who are not in communion with the church, and whom I will describe, distinguishing them from the dissenters, as those who are indifferent to the church—you are dealing with millions of the English people. And who are the English people? The English people are, without exception, the most enthusiastic people in the world. There are more

excitable races. The French, the Italians, are much more excitable; but for deep and fervid feeling, there is no race in the world at all equal to the English. And what is the subject, of all others, upon which the English people have been most enthusiastic? Religion. The notes on the gamut of their feeling are few, but they are deep. Industry, Liberty, Religion, form the solemn scale. Industry, Liberty, Religion—that is the history of England. Now, upon these three subjects they have periods of exaltation. They have had periods of deep feeling within our own experience, alike with regard to toil and with regard to freedom; and it is not impossible, nay, I would not hesitate to say, there may be many in this room who may witness a period of exaltation in the public mind of the country, and especially among these millions, with regard to religion, that has certainly not been equalled in our times, or in the times of our fathers. But what an opportunity is that for a church! When great bodies of the nation, who have never been in communion with the church, have their minds, their feelings, and their passions, all exalted in the direction of religion, and influenced by the religious principle, what an opportunity for a church, with her learning, her organization, and the ineffable influences of her tradition, with her sacred services, with her divine offices, with all the beauty of holiness in which she worships, to advance and address them! What an immense field for any church! But what a field for a corporation which is not merely a church, but which is the Church of England; blending with divine instruction the sentiment of patriotism, and announcing herself, not only as the Church of God, but as the Church of the Country! I say that, with these views, instead of supposing that the relations which exist between a large body of our fellow-subjects and the church—relations at this moment of indifference and even of alienation—are causes why the church should not assert her nationality, they are causes and

circumstances which peculiarly call upon the church to exert herself; and to prepare for a coming future which will demand her utmost energies, as I believe it will yield her greatest rewards. . . .

“Well, then, if I am to consider what are the means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted, I say certainly, in the first place—it is hardly necessary for me to say that—the church should educate the people. But though we have lived during the last quarter of a century in times not very favourable to the church; though the church has gone through great trials during that period, and has trials even at the present moment, not merely from its avowed enemies, still I think the church may congratulate herself upon the whole on what she has accomplished in the education of the people. It is possible that the means which have been at the command of the church may be reduced. It is possible that there may be fresh assaults and attacks upon the machinery by which the state has assisted the church in that great effort; but I think that no impartial man can shut his eyes to the conviction that the Church of England during the last five-and-twenty years has obtained a command over the education of the people, which fifty years ago could not have been contemplated, and so much having been done, we have no right to believe that the command will be diminished. On the contrary, whatever may be the conduct of the state, I express my belief that the influence of the church over the education of the people will increase. Well, so far, on that head, the result is favourable.

“There is another important means by which the nationality of the church may be, in my opinion, asserted. It is one on which there is controversy; but it is only by controversy that truth is elicited and established. I am in favour, not of any wild, indiscriminate, or rashly-adopted, but, on the contrary, of a moderate and well-considered extension of the episcopate. And I form my opinion upon the advant-

ages that would arise from an extension of that character, from the consequences of the extension of the episcopate to our colonies, which have been signal, and, to a certain degree, upon the consequences that have resulted from the establishment of the two new dioceses in England. In the diocese of Ripon, I think, the effects have been very considerable. More might have been done in the diocese of Manchester, where the occasion was golden; but something has been gained, and at least we have the consolation of hoping that a glorious future there awaits us.

"Then there is a third means and measure by which, I think, the nationality of the Church of England may be asserted; and that is by a further development of the lay element in the administration of affairs which are not of a spiritual character. We must erase from the mind of the country the idea that the Church of England is a clerical corporation, of which the clerical element, however important, is only a small element; and except—a great exception no doubt—the ministering to us in sacred things, there is nothing that concerns the church in which it is not alike the privilege and the duty of laymen to take an active part. Now, I believe, if such a prudent development of the lay element in the management of the affairs of the church takes place, you will have a third great means of asserting the nationality of the church.

"There is a fourth measure, which is, in my mind, of great importance, and that is the maintenance of the parochial system. Unfortunately in this country, so far as the church is concerned, very erroneous ideas exist upon the subject of our parochial constitution. In consequence of the great changes that have taken place of late years with regard to parochial administration,—as, for example, mainly in the poor law and in some other measures,—there is a too general idea that the parochial constitution has been subverted; but so far as the church is concerned, the parochial constitution is complete and

inviolable. It is not in any degree affected by any of those changes, and the right of visitation, both by the parishioner and the parish priest, remains intact, and if properly acted upon, is a source of immense and increasing influence, especially in those large towns of which we hear so much, and where the right is now considered as not even in existence.

"The fifth means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted brings me closely to this resolution; and I mention it last, not because I think it inferior in importance to any of those which have preceded it. You must render your clergy more efficient, whether in the great towns you increase the staff of curates, which perhaps is more advantageous than building churches without making preparations for their maintenance, and still less for their endowment; or whether you avail yourselves of those means which other societies in this diocese for the increase of spiritual assistance afford; or whether, lastly and chiefly, you take the great subject in hand which has brought us together to-day, and make an effort throughout the country for putting an end to those low stipends which are now almost in mockery appended to the discharge of laborious parochial duties. I can say from my own experience, what I have no doubt many gentlemen in this room can confirm, that in innumerable cases at this moment the clergyman of the Church of England, devoting his life, his health, the fruits of a refined education, to the service of God and the comforting of the people, is not only not remunerated, but is absolutely, by his contributions to local and parochial objects and institutions, out of pocket at the end of the year in the parish which he serves.

"Well, these are five great practical means by which the nationality of the church may be asserted. Still they are but means and machinery, and they must be inspired by that spirit of zeal and devotion which alone can insure success, and which alone deserve success; but in the present state

of this country, after the analysis of its population which I have presumed to sketch to-day, I say that a great corporation like the Church of England, where the clergy and laity act in union, may look forward by means of measures such as I have now mentioned under these five heads, to great, triumphant, and final success.

"There is only one other topic upon which I will make a remark before I conclude. It will be observed that the five measures which I have ventured to recommend, with one exception, can be adopted by the church without any appeal to the legislature—a great advantage; and in the exceptional instance, namely, that which refers to the extension of the episcopate, if an application were made to the legislature, couched with the discretion becoming the subject, I have little doubt it would be successful. We must not shut our eyes to this fact, that the time has gone by when we could ask for new powers and privileges from parliament to establish the position of the Church of England. That time is gone. I myself do not undervalue a public recognition of the church by the legislature of the country. I think its importance is great, perhaps cannot be over-estimated. I believe that in its action it gives the church an authority with many minds which, without that position, she would not possess or exercise. It is because we believe that a public recognition of the nationality of the church by the constitution is of that great value, that I, and others who have acted with me in that behalf, have resisted all those attacks which during the last few years in parliament have been directed at the privileges and the public status of the church. We have so acted, because we believed that public

status would give the church an immense advantage when the opportunity offered of asserting her nationality. If we had not believed such would be the consequence, we should have declined contending for privileges which would otherwise be obsolete, and for a public status that was barren. But because we thought that, when the hour arrived for a great effort in the church—and I think that hour has arrived—a public recognition by the ancient constitution of the country of her national status would be of immense advantage, and give it great vantage-ground, we made those efforts and entered into that struggle. I would venture to hope that this meeting to-day may be of some use; I will venture to hope that the effort of this diocese will be great, and that it will not be confined to this diocese. I hope we shall be no longer appalled and paralyzed by indefinite estimates of the hostility and the obstacles we have to encounter. I hope, above all, that those faint-hearted among our brethren, who seem to me of late years only to be considering how they could decorously relinquish a position of great responsibility, will learn that the wisest course with regard to the Church of England, as with regard to all other cases in which a great duty is involved, is to be courageous, and endeavour to perform that duty. Then I am confident that this Church of England will show to the world that it has powers of renovation which have not been suspected by some. For my own part, I uphold it, not merely because it is the sanctuary of divine truth, but because I verily believe it is our best security for that civil and religious liberty of which we hear so much, and which we are told is opposed to its institution."

CHAPTER XIX.

CHURCH MATTERS.

THE political outlook still continued gloomy and depressing. On all sides there were disturbing influences, the developments of which it became difficult to determine. The civil war in America was still raging with all the fury and bitterness characteristic of fratricidal strife, and by its interruption of commerce with this country had plunged Lancashire in the deepest misery.* Differences of opinion had soon appeared among the allied English, French, and Spaniards as to the object of the expedition to Mexico, and at last France had been left to prosecute the enterprise alone, with what fatal results we shall have occasion subsequently to relate. Garibaldi was busy with his inflammatory proclamations, creating disturbances in Sicily. A revolt against the English had broken out in Japan, and Mr. Richardson, of the British embassy, had been murdered. Disputes had arisen between Denmark and Germany. Earl Russell (Lord John had been raised to the peerage in 1861) had recommended the Danish Government to give to Holstein and Lauenburg all that the Germanic

Confederation had demanded on their behalf, and to assure to Schleswig self-government, advice which Denmark refused to follow. In Prussia, the king, imitating the example of our first Charles, had closed the session, and had announced his intention of governing independently of the constitution, by declaring 'the government of his Majesty as under the necessity of controlling the public affairs outside the constitution.' Greece was in confusion; an insurrection had broken out against the fat and foolish Otho; a provisional government had been formed, which announced the overthrow of the old dynasty and the beginning of a new administration. To prevent bloodshed, Otho issued a manifesto, stating that he would quit the kingdom; and accordingly he embarked on board a British man-of-war. Subsequently the national assembly of Greece declared the throne vacant, and announced that Prince Alfred of England had been elected king. The prince was proclaimed sovereign of Greece, but was not permitted, according to the treaty of 1832, to accept the crown. At the instigation of France, England and Russia were invited to join in French intervention in North America; Russia declined to interfere, and England decided upon maintaining her past neutrality. Diplomacy was occupied in writing despatches as to the conditions under which the Ionian Islands would be ceded to Greece. Oppressed Poland had once more risen to shake off the iron yoke of Muscovite rule. The immediate cause of the outbreak was a pitiless system of conscription by Russia, which, having been abolished by the Emperor Nicholas, was now revived in the most oppressive form.

* "It appeared that at the end of the last week in January, 1863, the guardians of 147 Unions in the manufacturing districts were affording relief to the amount of £15,612, which was distributed among 221,045 persons. From the Relief Fund during the same week the sum of £89,474 was expended in the relief of 874,680 persons. The total relief was therefore £55,086, which was distributed among 595,675 persons. The total contributions from all sources—the spontaneous contributions of the people of the United Kingdom, of the colonies, and of foreign countries up to the end of January, amounted to the large sum of £760,692. It was quite true that the cotton operatives had been slightly better employed of late, but he [Mr. Bazley] feared there was no possibility of any improvement at present to any great extent. He regretted, too, that the distress was increasing to a lamentable extent among the class of small tradesmen, and other classes, who had not hitherto received assistance from the Relief Fund. The fact was, that for the last two years a large portion of the people of the manufacturing districts had been living upon their capital."—*Mr. Bazley, House of Commons, February 5, 1863.*

It was carried into effect not by drawing lots, but by selecting the most active and enterprising inhabitants of the cities. In fact it was a design, as Lord Napier said, to make a clean sweep of the revolutionary youth of Poland. When it was first threatened, a secret body called the Central Committee issued clandestine publications to the people, urging them to resistance. On the commencement of the conscription 2500 men were carried off, and immediately thousands of young men took flight. The committee issued a manifesto, calling upon all to form themselves into armed bands and resist the tyranny of Russia. The flame of revolt burst forth in a variety of places, and soon Russian Poland was in one vast conspiracy against the government. In China the Taeping rebels were fighting against the emperor, and the arms of His Celestial Majesty were aided by England and France.

Such was the situation of affairs when the parliament of 1863 was opened by commission. The only bright feature in this catalogue of distress and agitation was the engagement of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, which the country hailed with delight, and the news of which acted not a little as a powerful counter-balance against the prevailing gloom and depression. In the speech from the throne our domestic and foreign policy was commented upon, and the course we were to observe in the future. It ran as follows:—

“MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“Her Majesty commands us to inform you that, since you were last assembled, she has declared her consent to a marriage between His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra, daughter of Prince Christian of Denmark; and Her Majesty has concluded thereupon a treaty with the King of Denmark, which will be laid before you.

“The constant proofs which Her Majesty has received of your attachment to her person and family, persuade her that you will participate in her sentiments on an event so interesting to Her Majesty, and which, with the blessing of God,

will, she trusts, prove so conducive to the happiness of her family, and to the welfare of her people.

“Her Majesty doubts not that you will enable her to make provision for such an establishment as you may think suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir-apparent to the crown of these realms.

“A revolution having taken place in Greece, by which the throne of that kingdom has become vacant, the Greek nation have expressed the strongest desire that Her Majesty's son Prince Alfred should accept the Greek crown. This unsolicited and spontaneous manifestation of goodwill towards Her Majesty and her family, and of a due appreciation of the benefits conferred by the principles and practice of the British constitution, could not fail to be highly gratifying, and has been deeply felt by Her Majesty.

“But the diplomatic engagements of Her Majesty's crown, together with other weighty considerations, have prevented Her Majesty from yielding to this general wish of the Greek nation.

“Her Majesty trusts, however, that the same principles of choice which led the Greek nation to direct their thoughts, in the first instance, towards His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, may guide them to the selection of a sovereign under whose sway the kingdom of Greece may enjoy the blessings of internal prosperity, and of peaceful relations with other states; and if in such a state of things the Republic of the Seven Islands should declare a deliberate wish to be united to the kingdom of Greece, Her Majesty would be prepared to take such steps as may be necessary for a revision of the treaty of November, 1815, by which that Republic was reconstituted, and was placed under the protection of the British crown.

“Her Majesty's relations with Foreign Powers continue to be friendly and satisfactory.

“Her Majesty has abstained from taking any step with a view to induce a cessation of the conflict between the contending parties in the North American States, because it has not yet seemed to Her Majesty that any such overtures could be attended with a probability of success.

“Her Majesty has viewed with the deepest concern the desolating warfare which still rages in those regions; and she has witnessed with heartfelt grief the severe distress and suffering which that war has inflicted upon a large class of Her Majesty's subjects, but which have been borne by them with noble fortitude and with exemplary resignation. It is some consolation to Her Majesty to be led to hope that this suffering and this distress are rather diminishing than increasing, and that some revival of employ-

ment is beginning to take place in the manufacturing districts.

"It has been most gratifying to Her Majesty to witness the abundant generosity with which all classes of her subjects in all parts of her empire have contributed to relieve the wants of their suffering fellow-countrymen; and the liberality with which Her Majesty's colonial subjects have on this occasion given their aid has proved that, although their dwelling-places are far away, their hearts are still warm with unabated affection for the land of their fathers.

"The Relief Committees have superintended with constant and laborious attention the distribution of the funds intrusted to their charge.

"Her Majesty commands us to inform you that she has concluded with the King of the Belgians a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, and a Convention respecting Joint-Stock Companies. That treaty and that convention will be laid before you.

"Her Majesty has likewise given directions that there shall be laid before you papers relating to the affairs of Italy, of Greece, and of Denmark, and that papers shall also be laid before you relating to occurrences which have lately taken place at Japan.

"GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

"Her Majesty has directed that the Estimates for the ensuing year shall be laid before you. They have been prepared with a due regard to economy, and will provide for such reductions of expenditure as have appeared consistent with the proper efficiency of the public service.

"MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

"We are commanded by Her Majesty to inform you that, notwithstanding the continuance of the civil war in North America, the general commerce of the country during the past year has not sensibly diminished.

"The Treaty of Commerce which Her Majesty concluded with the Emperor of the French has already been productive of results highly advantageous to both the nations to which it applies; and the general state of the revenue, notwithstanding many unfavourable circumstances, has not been unsatisfactory.

"Her Majesty trusts that these results may be taken as proofs that the productive resources of the country are unimpaired.

"It has been gratifying to Her Majesty to observe the spirit of order which happily prevails throughout her dominions, and which is so essential an element in the well-being and prosperity of nations.

"Various measures of public usefulness and improvement will be submitted for your con-

sideration; and Her Majesty fervently prays that in all your deliberations the blessing of Almighty God may guide your counsels to the promotion of the welfare and happiness of her people."

It will be observed that in this speech no mention was made of any specific legislative projects; there was nothing said about reform, retrenchment, or future legislation, except the vague pledge that "various measures of public usefulness and improvement" would be laid before parliament. On the occasion of the debate on the address in the House of Lords the Prince of Wales for the first time took the oaths and his seat.

In the House of Commons the address was moved by Mr. Calthorpe and seconded by Mr. Bazley, and in the course of the debate, Mr. Disraeli (February 5, 1863) passed a searching and careful criticism upon the state of Europe and the policy of the government. The first topic which, however, attracted his attention was the happy announcement of the approaching marriage of the Prince of Wales. "I am sure," he said, "that there is no passage in the speech of the lord commissioners which will be received with more complete and more cordial sympathy by this House than that in which the persuasion is expressed, by the commands of Her Majesty, that this House will sympathize with the sentiments which Her Majesty feels on so interesting an event as the marriage of the heir-apparent of these realms. There was a time when royal marriages were the perplexity of politicians, and it was supposed that by the adroit negotiation of such transactions we might often control, and sometimes even change, the balance of power. Those times, happily, are for ever passed. But it would be, I am sure, a great error to believe that in a country like England, where happily the domestic affections are cherished and venerated, a royal marriage might not conduce greatly to the power and influence of a prince. We have seen in our time, and in this country, what may be the effect in

that respect of a royal alliance. Sir, his sovereign parent offers to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales an example which, if followed, will, I am sure, endear him to the hearts of all Englishmen; and, sir, I am equally confident that at this moment he will not forget that other parent, whom a year ago, in this House, we met to mourn, who built up a royal hearth on the principle of household love, and who yet, by his refined and profound intelligence, elevated it above the majesty of thrones."

Mr. Disraeli then alluded to the terrible distress which had visited Lancashire, and to the generous efforts of the relief committee to abate its miseries. "When we remember," he said, alluding to the poverty-stricken operatives, "the fortitude with which they have endured that visitation, when we remember the spirit with which our suffering fellow-subjects have been sustained, I think there is, if I may so express it, some moral compensation for the material losses; and if it prove, as I hope and believe it may prove, that ultimately this trial may conduce to the sounder and more permanent prosperity of the community, I hope we may be justified in treating this great visitation rather as a misfortune than a calamity. Sir, I will not stop to panegyrize the conduct of any particular class. I will not offer now a needless, perhaps a fulsome tribute of admiration and approval, to any particular body of Her Majesty's subjects. What in this terrible trial is of good cheer for England, is the proof it has furnished of the mutual trust and the entire affection that subsist among all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, and which indicate, whatever may be our form of government, the existence of a real commonwealth." Then, by an easy transition, he passed on from the distress in Lancashire to the cause of that distress—the civil war across the Atlantic.

"I am bound to say," he continued, "that from the first, and subsequent events have only confirmed my conviction, I

have always looked upon the struggle in America in the light of a great revolution. Great revolutions, whatever may be their alleged causes, are not likely to be commenced or to be concluded with precipitation. Before the civil war commenced the United States were colonies, because we should not forget that such communities do not cease to be colonies because they are independent. They were not only colonies, but they were colonizing, and they existed under all the conditions of colonial life except that of mere political dependence. But even before the civil war I think that all impartial observers must have been convinced, that in that community there were smouldering elements which indicated the possibility of a change, and, perhaps, of a violent change. The immense increase of population; the still greater increase of wealth; the introduction of foreign races in large numbers as citizens, not brought up under the laws and customs which were adapted to a more limited, and practically a more homogeneous race; the character of the political constitution consequent, perhaps, on these circumstances; the absence of any theatre for the ambitious and refined intellects of the country, which deteriorated public spirit and lowered public morality; and, above all, the increasing influence of the United States upon the political fortunes of Europe—these were all circumstances which indicated the more than possibility that the mere colonial character of these communities might suddenly be violently subverted, and those imperial characteristics appear which seem to be the destiny of man. I cannot conceal from myself the conviction that, whoever in this House may be young enough to live to witness the ultimate consequences of this civil war, will see, whenever the waters have subsided, a different America from that which was known to our fathers, and even from that of which this generation has had so much experience. It will be an America of armies, of diplomacy, of rival states and manœuvring cabinets, of frequent turbu-

lence, and probably of frequent wars. With these views I have myself, during the last session, exerted whatever influence I might possess in endeavouring to dissuade my friends from embarrassing Her Majesty's government in that position of politic and dignified reserve which they appeared to me to have taken up on this question. It did not appear to me, looking at these transactions across the Atlantic, not as events of a mere casual character, but as being such as might probably influence, as the great French revolution influenced and is still influencing European affairs, that there was on our part due to the existing authorities in America a large measure of deference in the difficulties which they had to encounter. At the same time it was natural to feel, what I would not attempt to disguise, the greatest respect for those Southern states, who, representing a vast population of men, were struggling for some of the greatest objects of existence—independence and power. It appeared to me that the course which Her Majesty's government had apparently resolved upon was one which, on the whole, was honourable to this country, and would prove beneficial to all classes of the community.

"I was therefore surprised, and, individually speaking, somewhat mortified, when I found that in the course of the autumn Her Majesty's government commissioned one or two of their members to repair to the chief seats of industry in the country to announce, as I understood it, an entire change in the policy which they had throughout supported and sanctioned.* It was not an accident; the declaration was made formally, and it was made avowedly with the sanction of the government. If that declaration meant anything, it meant that the Southern states would be recognized; because, if it be true that they

have created armies, navies, and a people, we are bound by every principle of policy and of public law to recognize their political existence. There appeared to me to be a great inconsistency in that declaration. I thought that a course of conduct was then recommended by the government, which nothing had occurred in the interval to justify. It is most inconvenient that, upon a subject of such importance, and upon which the government appeared from the first to have taken up a correct and dignified position, the government should have exhibited such contradictory conduct and such conflicting opinions, and that during the autumn they should have felt it their duty to communicate this vacillation of purpose and this inconsistency of judgment to the whole nation. At the commencement almost of the struggle we were told by one minister, who, above all, ought to be best informed on these topics, what, in the opinion of the government, were the motives of this civil war. We were told that on the part of the North there was a desire to establish dominion, and on the part of the South to achieve independence. It may have been discreet, perhaps, on the part of the government to make that public declaration of their opinion; but what are we to say of the subsequent definitions of this contest which have also been supplied by the government? It is only a fortnight since one of the cabinet ministers told us that the whole cause of this war was the existence of slavery, and he vigorously denounced that pestilent institution. What agreement is there, then, between the president of the board of trade and the foreign minister, who ought to be the greatest authority on matters of this character? What are we to say when one day we find an eminent member of the cabinet recommending the recognition of Southern independence, and the next day another equally important colleague telling us that none of the conditions on which independence should be recognized, exist in the South? These

* In an after-dinner speech, at Newcastle, (October 7, 1862), Mr. Gladstone expressed it as his opinion, that Jefferson Davis had really succeeded in making the South an independent nation. Coming from a cabinet minister, at a time when neutrality was understood to be the policy of the government, the announcement caused considerable sensation.

varying opinions are so prevalent among the members of the government that only a day or two ago one of them, not yet admitted to the cabinet, but whose lips are steeped in the gravity of the privy council, told us that in the opinion of the government the 'Lord of Hosts was on the side of the Southern states.' I think it very much to be regretted that the government did not adhere to that reserve which distinguished them last session upon this great subject, and that it is much to be deprecated that, unless a change has taken place in their policy, there should not have been more silence during the recess as to their individual opinions."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded with his sarcastic criticism. If the government, he said, had objected to interfere in the conflict between the Northern and Southern states, there had been no objection to meddle with other countries. So far as he could judge of the state of affairs, the cabinet had employed the autumn in interfering in almost every part of the world, except in America. The objection of ministers to interference was therefore not an abstract one. Papers in reference to Greece, Italy, and Denmark had been promised to be laid before the House, and he should say that on all those subjects papers were very necessary; they might throw some light upon transactions and communications which had certainly startled and perplexed the country during the parliamentary recess. Still there was one country respecting which papers had not been promised, and respecting which he wished to obtain some information. That country was China. He wanted to have a more precise idea of what their relations were with the Chinese than seemed to be in the possession of parliament. So far as he could judge, there was constant fighting going on in China, and that fighting appeared to be supported in a great degree by Englishmen. Indeed, during the autumn certain English officers had openly stated, and their statements had been supported by the government, that

they had been engaged by the Emperor of China to enlist their fellow-subjects to fight in the emperor's behalf—another Spanish legion in fact. Of this active interference Mr. Disraeli strongly disapproved. "There is then," he said, making an attack upon Lord Palmerston, "war in China. Officers in Her Majesty's service are enlisting British subjects, in order to interfere between the Emperor of China and his rebellious subjects; and I want to know whether that is a policy which this House approves, and whether they do not think it requires some explanation? Let me remind the House that about twenty-five years since our Chinese policy commenced. The noble lord, the present first minister, may be said to be its author. It began by attempting to put down the Tartar dynasty; and the noble lord, when informed by the late much-respected Sir James Graham,* then a member of this House, that the population of China was very considerable—nearly half the population of the globe—and that it was not so very easy to put down a government commanding resources of such magnitude, said it was very true the population consisted of about 300,000,000, but half the population consisted of secret societies; that the great body of the subjects of the Emperor of China were discontented with his government, and he was confident they would have support, of which the House had no knowledge; the government was well informed, and the House might depend upon it, the war would be successful. The war was successful; it was successful in developing ever since these secret societies, which have taken other names familiar to the House. Twenty-five years have elapsed, and the noble lord who made war against the Tartar dynasty is now supporting the Tartar dynasty and making war against these rebellious subjects of the Emperor of China. We have completely changed our position. We are making war against the Taeping insurrection. There has been a great controversy in this House

* He died October 25, 1861.

as to the origin of the insurrection. Who are the Taepings? What are the Taepings? I maintain that we have nothing to do with the Taepings. Whether they are patriots, or whether they are brigands, is nothing to the people of England. The status of the Taepings is a question for China, not for England: and if we attempt now in this illegitimate and round about manner to support the Tartar dynasty, we shall ultimately be involved in another Chinese war for a different object and on a different side from that which we have hitherto taken. I say it is a matter of great importance, at a moment when we hear for the first time of a reduction of public expenditure, that we should not get involved again in a Chinese war."

He rejoiced to hear that there was to be the reduction in the public expenditure he had always advocated; but he sincerely trusted that such reduction would be effected by a policy which did not lead to expenditure, and not by a careless and hasty cutting down expenditure. His observations upon this point offered him another opportunity of girding at the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. "We hear a great deal," he said, "of the frugal government of the Duke of Wellington.

* The Emperor Taou-Kwang, who died February 25, 1850, during the latter part of his reign became liberal in his views, and favoured the introduction of European arts; but his son, the late emperor, a rash and narrow-minded prince, quickly departed from his father's wise policy, and adopted reactionary measures, particularly against English influence. An insurrection broke out in consequence, August, 1850, and quickly became of alarming importance. The insurgents at first proposed only to expel the Tartars; but in March, 1851, a pretender was announced among them, first by the name of Tien-teh (Celestial Virtue), but afterwards assuming other names. He announced himself as the restorer of the worship of the true God, Shang-ti, but derived many of his dogmas from the Bible. He declared himself to be the monarch of all beneath the sky, the true lord of China, the brother of Jesus, and the second son of God, and demanded universal submission. His followers were termed Taepings. The Taepings, who commenced hostilities against the Imperialists, met with considerable success, capturing Wuchang, January 12, 1853, and Nankin, March 19. Their operations, which seem to have been suspended during the war between France and England and China, were renewed in 1861, and they captured Ningpo, December 9. They were, however, defeated March 1, and May 8 and 21, 1862, and Ningpo was wrested from them. They were again defeated October 23 and 24, and in 1863 and 1864 they sustained so many reverses that their cause had become desperate. They were defeated with great loss in February, 1866.

The Duke of Wellington was not a prime minister who would have starved the army. The Duke of Wellington, it is well-known, had an equal admiration and feeling for the other branch of Her Majesty's service. It is quite clear the army and navy under the Duke of Wellington would be in an efficient and complete state. We are told that in those days we had not the empire which we now possess. We have some colonies which we did not possess in the days of the Duke of Wellington; but I believe that the colonial expenditure then was greater than it is now, because those considerable changes in the government of colonies, which have led to a reduction of expenditure, had not then been carried into effect. Therefore, the Duke of Wellington had a great army and navy to maintain, and our establishments abroad and our colonies, and yet was a frugal minister. Why was he a frugal minister? Because he did not follow a policy of intrigue; because his policy was a truly Conservative policy. It was not a policy of sensation. It was not a policy of surprise. Such a policy may suit continental nations, where public opinion only takes in the consideration of external affairs. Such a policy may suit new dynasties; but a diplomacy of intrigue and a policy of sensation and surprise are not necessary for a country like England, where liberty and industry occupy sufficiently the energies and minds of the people, and where we are blessed with a constitution deeply rooted in the convictions of the country and supported by the traditions of centuries. It is necessary clearly to understand this. Let it not be supposed that, because we advocate a frugal and economical administration of the public funds, we are opposed to an efficient state of the public service or the maintenance of those establishments abroad which are necessary to maintain our position; and let it be remembered that the inevitable result of a restless policy must be an expenditure very incompatible with the permanency of the reductions which are now promised us."

Mr. Disraeli then briefly touched upon the Schleswig Holstein question; the difficulty as to the residence of the Pope; the opposition of Lord Palmerston to the penetration of the isthmus of Suez; and the insurrection in Greece—questions which we shall have to discuss more fully when the papers relating to them come before the House. Controversies, he sneered, had often taken place with respect to the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Sometimes it was called spirited, and sometimes turbulent. Sometimes the noble lord was described as the incarnation of Liberalism, and at other times he was denounced as the ready tool of any despot—provided only the despot be powerful. As a matter of fact, the foreign policy of the prime minister was simply perplexing and inconsistent. Lord Palmerston objected to the construction of the Suez Canal, since it would endanger the integrity of the Turkish empire, and yet, by the proposed cession of the Ionian Isles to Greece, he was placing the Ottoman empire in far greater jeopardy, and practically reversing the policy which England had deliberately adopted. To the cession of these islands to the new sovereignty of Greece the Conservative party was strongly opposed. Our protectorate of the Ionian Islands was deemed most important in respect to the position of England in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and on account of the route to India by way of Egypt. The possession of Corfu alone, it had been said, was equal to the addition of two frigates to the English fleet. The Ionian Islands had been most serviceable during the Crimean war, and afforded the safest and best harbours in the Mediterranean. Handed over to a naval power which might one day be hostile to England, they might prove, it was contended, a source of great embarrassment to us. Upon this point Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. He asserted that the views of those who regarded the right of England over the Ionian Islands as being merely a protectorate, were entirely fallacious.

"This," he said, "is very dangerous ground to take; and I most earnestly recommend the House to pause before they accept representations of this kind. The treaties of 1815 intrusted the Ionian Isles to England about in the same manner that they intrusted Paris to the French people. Both parties possessed what was intrusted to them. We possessed the Ionian Isles before the treaties of 1815, and it becomes us to consider how we possessed them. We possessed them by conquest; and the question immediately arises why were they conquered? You do not conquer places out of mere wantonness or for amusement. The Ionian Isles were conquered, because the great men, to whom was intrusted the duty of guarding British interests and maintaining British power in those waters, represented most earnestly to the English government that they could not accomplish their behests as long as these insular harbours were in possession of our powerful rival and enemy. It is, or it should be, well known that the occupation of the Ionian Isles by the French was part of the secret negotiations of Tilsit; and it was only in consequence of an arrangement with Russia, before war was declared between that power and England, that French troops were landed from Russian ships on these islands, where the injurious influence exercised by them during the war upon British shipping and British interests was so great, that no less a man than Lord Collingwood impressed upon the British government that it was absolutely necessary that these harbours should be in our possession. And they were in our possession. Corfu was not seized in a military sense; but six of these islands, including Cephalonia, which was described by Sir Charles Napier—no mean authority on this subject—as possessing the most considerable harbour in the Mediterranean, had been conquered, and had been five years in the possession of England at the time of the peace. And why was not Corfu in our possession? Why, Corfu was a thorn

in our side. We had not succeeded in taking Corfu, but we had strictly blockaded it; and when Napoleon suddenly fell, the French surrendered it to England by a military convention. It was in every sense a military surrender; and therefore, when the congress of Vienna had to deliberate upon the settlement of Europe, we were in military possession of these islands, which we had in fact conquered and occupied, because in the possession of our enemy we had found them most injurious to our power and our interests."

Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to argue that the handing over of the Ionian Islands to Greece would have a mischievous influence upon that power: it would increase the resources, the population, and wealth of Greece; it would encourage her to aspire to the possession of Albania, Thessaly, and other provinces, and thus endanger the integrity of the Turkish empire. The islands had been taken by us because their possession by an enemy would be injurious to our interests; therefore it was absurd to maintain that their possession by England was not conducive to her interests. He hoped that Her Majesty's government were not about to adopt the wild notions which had of late been promulgated, which were hostile to the very principle of the British empire. "Professors and rhetoricians," he said in conclusion, "find a system for every contingency and a principle for every chance; but you are not going, I hope, to leave the destinies of the British empire to prigs and pedants. The statesmen who construct, and the warriors who achieve, are only influenced by the instinct of power, and animated by the love of country. Those are the feelings and those the methods which form empires. There may be grave questions as to the best mode of obtaining wealth. Some may be in favour of protection of domestic and colonial interests, some of unrestricted competition, or some of what I am quite surprised have now become so modish, commercial treaties and reciprocal arrangements for the advan-

tage of commercial exchange—propositions which used to be scouted in this House; but there can be no question either in or out of this House that the best mode of preserving wealth is power. A country, and especially a maritime country, must get possession of the strong places of the world if it wishes to contribute to its power. I cannot say that I have yet heard any argument that appears to justify the course Her Majesty's government have hitherto pursued, or the expectations they have held out to the Greek islands."

In reply Lord Palmerston defended the foreign policy of the government—the operations in China, the proceedings relative to Denmark, and the offers made to the Vatican. With regard to the cession of the Ionian Islands, he thus vindicated the course ministers had pursued:—"The fate of those islands," he said, "was determined, like the fate of many of the countries of Europe, by the treaties concluded in 1815; and to those treaties, and especially to the treaty in regard to the Ionian Islands, Great Britain was a party. Well, what did that treaty do? Did that treaty say that the Ionian Islands were to be what the right hon. gentleman stated—a British territory, and to belong to the British crown as one of its possessions? Quite the contrary. It stated that the Septinsular Republic was to be a separate and independent state, but, as a separate and independent state, was to be placed under the protection of the British crown. But it is no part of the dominions of the British crown. The queen is not sovereign of the Ionian Islands. Our treaties do not include or bind the Ionian Islands. When a treaty of commerce is made, there must be a separate act on the part of the Ionian Islands to give them the benefit of that treaty. They have a separate legislature of their own; we do not make laws for them. They are to all intents and purposes, literally and legally, a separate state, forming no part of the British territory or dominions, but under the protection of

England, by virtue of the treaty concluded between England and the other great powers of Europe. Therefore, all the argument of the right hon. gentleman, founded on the supposition that Corfu and the other Ionian Islands were to England what Paris is to France, is, if he will allow me to repeat his own words, a 'perfect absurdity,' and has no bearing whatever on the question which the House may have to consider with reference to these islands. It is not now the time to discuss the policy of making that cession under the circumstances contemplated by the paragraph in the queen's speech. My own opinion is that it would be a wise measure. I think it would be a generous measure. I think it is due to that Ionian state, which was placed under our protection for its own benefit, and not for our advantage. We were bound to do the best for it. I believe we have done the best for it hitherto by maintaining the protectorate; but I think, if Greece is established under an enlightened sovereign, who will develop her internal prosperity and maintain her external peace, that it will be for the benefit of those islands to be united with their fellow-countrymen. I think, too, that it is an example which may not be lost upon other countries. There are other questions pending in the world, in Europe especially, with regard to which an example of generous disinterestedness on the part of Great Britain, for the benefit of those whose fate has been committed to her charge, may not be without result, and I trust it may be imitated hereafter." The address was then agreed to without any opposition.

Shortly after this debate the subject of the treaty of commerce with Italy came up for discussion. The Liberal party have always piqued themselves upon their originality in advocating commercial treaties, and upon their sound and special support of the principles of free trade; perhaps the remarks made by Mr. Disraeli (February 17, 1863) upon this occasion may tend somewhat to

check the ardour of their self-glorification. "Sir," he said, "I never heard that commercial principles were connected with the abstract principle of a free exchange of commodities between nations. There is nothing very modern, I believe, in the invention of commercial treaties; nor am I aware that the Tory party have ever shown a disrelish to support commercial treaties, if commercial treaties are to be accepted, as we are told by a member of the government (Mr. Layard), as a test of sincerity of belief in the principle of free trade. Why, commercial treaties even with France have been negotiated successfully by Tory ministers many years before the present commercial treaty with France. There was the commercial treaty of Mr. Pitt, which was only a reproduction of the treaty which Lord Bolingbroke, a Tory minister, negotiated successfully more than 150 years ago, for the interchange of products between England and France on terms much easier than those that at present exist. And why was that treaty negotiated, but not ratified? Why was it defeated? It was defeated through the opposition of the Whig party in this House. Mr. Addison, one of the most distinguished members that ever sat in this House, and who afterwards was secretary of state, exerted all his wit and unrivalled powers of humour and composition in ridiculing the arrival of a distinguished foreigner in this country—one Count Tariff, whose mission was to introduce the habit of free exchange of commodities between two great nations.* Those powers of ridicule and humour, supported by the unfortunate prejudices of the country, defeated that treaty. Therefore nothing can be more unfounded than to suppose that, because we on this side of the House are in favour of commercial treaties, we are in fact at all deserting those principles which have been habitually supported, I may almost say for centuries,

* See "The late Trial and Conviction of Count Tariff." *Addison's Works*, edited by Tickell, vol. v., pp. 393-399.

by the Tory party." Nor were commercial treaties, Mr. Disraeli contended, based upon the principles of free trade. If there could be anything, he argued, opposed to the abstract principles of free exchange, upon which unrestricted competition depended, it was those regulations and conventions by which reciprocal advantages were sought in the commercial exchange of nations. "You," he cried, addressing the Liberal side of the House, "are departing from those principles which you take every opportunity of claiming as your own; you are departing from the ground of pure science and inexorable logic the moment you attempt to negotiate the terms upon which commercial exchange shall take place. Now, in the case of the French treaty, we came forward with certain advantages which we proposed to exchange for others. That I thought myself at the time, generally speaking, to be a most wise policy. I thought, and always have thought, that anything which favoured commercial exchange between England and France was a policy which each country ought to favour; but the scheme was entirely contrary to those abstract principles of free exchange which you have always upheld. A commercial treaty is based upon reciprocity, a principle which the Conservative party have always advocated, and not upon free trade."

Then he proceeded to assert—statements which have been so amply fulfilled by the commercial depression at the present day—that by the adoption of free trade the country had been too liberal in parting with its privileges, and could not now return to protection and reciprocity, or in other words, to commercial treaties. "The country," he said, mindful of the memorable free-trade debate, "has accepted the policy of unrestricted competition. If it be dissatisfied with that policy, let it frankly announce its dissatisfaction. But we cannot have the advantage of a policy of unrestricted competition, and at the same time as regards commerce enjoy the ad-

vantages of exchange under diplomatic arrangement; it is impossible at once to enjoy both. The country now wants to have the double advantage, but warning enough has been given. You have been told often and often by members of this House, that whether it regards commerce or whether it respects navigation, you were too liberal in parting with the advantages and privileges you possessed; but the principles of unrestricted competition were adopted, and it is now too late to inquire whether you are right or wrong. The policy which you then supported was accepted, and by that policy you must in my opinion stand." To endeavour to combine the commercial advantages which accrue from unrestricted competition with the benefits which can only attend upon diplomatic arrangements was, he contended, a monstrous effort which could only end in failure. The age of commercial treaties was past, because England had now no means and no materials for negotiation. Political influence, and not the influence of commercial considerations, could now alone help England to negotiate a commercial treaty.

But of all foreign questions—far above commercial treaties with France or Italy or Belgium—the resistance of the Poles against the tyranny of Russia was the event which was followed with the keenest sympathy and interest by England generally. Papers relating to the insurrection were laid before parliament, and more than one debate ensued, which showed how strong was the feeling of the country against the stern measures employed by the Czar to crush the activity of the rebels—if men fighting to regain their own land can be called rebels. Early in the session (February 27, 1863), Mr. Pope Hennessey moved for an address to the crown, representing that certain treaty obligations, incurred by England and other powers with Russia in regard to Poland, had been broken by the Czar, and that the interposition of England in vindication of her own solemn engage-

ments was demanded. He declared that the Polish insurrection was due entirely to the unparalleled outrages committed by Russia against the Poles, which had at last driven that unhappy people to desperation. He did not ask for hostile intervention; with the sympathy of the great powers, parties to the treaty of Vienna, Poland herself would be able to maintain her position. With much that Mr. Hennessey said Lord Palmerston fully agreed. It was impossible, he remarked, not to feel the deepest sympathy for the Polish nation. The treaty of Vienna had been systematically violated; still by that treaty we were not obliged to interfere—we had a right to interfere, but we were not under an obligation to do so. Lord Palmerston concluded by hoping that Mr. Hennessey would be satisfied by the almost unanimous expression of opinion in the House, and would not press his motion.

Mr. Disraeli took part in the debate. "We often hear it said," he began, "in the course of these discussions, that the partition of Poland was a great crime. If it were a great crime, it was a crime shared by the Polish people. The political existence of 20,000,000 is not destroyed without there being some faults on their side. But whether or not it was a great crime, there is no doubt for Europe it was a great misfortune. Since that partition let us recollect what has occurred in Europe. The greatest events which have ever happened in Europe have happened since the partition of Poland. The whole of the French revolution, and all those immense results which flowed from that great ebullition, have since then occurred. Since then there has appeared a character on the European stage, who alone in modern times could be classed with the Alexanders and Cæsars of antiquity. All the boundaries of the kingdoms which existed when Poland was partitioned, have been altered; the laws of almost every country in Europe have been remodelled; new codes have been introduced, and new governments

called into being. In short, greater and more numerous changes have occurred in the eighty years since that event than were probably ever before crowded into a similar period of the history of man." He then delivered a glowing eulogy upon Lord Castlereagh for having counselled, though counselled in vain, at the congress of Vienna, the restoration of political independence to Poland, in the face of the then irresistible and unprecedented strength of Russia. With regard to interference in the affairs of Poland, he was as desirous as any member in the House that ministers should not pass the present state of Poland over in silence, but that they should avail themselves of their rights under the treaty and take every other proceeding which they thought wise and expedient, to carry into action a policy favourable to the Poles. But all that did not necessarily mean war, and he trusted that great and beneficial changes would take place in the condition of Poland without an appeal to "the last arbiter of human destiny."

Then he launched forth against those Polish "patriots," who, on the strength of their black beards, expressive eyes, and garrulous loyalty, were then frequently to be met with in the *salons* of Paris and the drawing-rooms of London; and who, in the full enjoyment of ease and luxury, and leagues removed from the grasp of the Muscovite police, penned furious epistles to their compatriots at Warsaw, bidding unhappy Poland rise against her oppressors and free herself from the Russian yoke—advice which cost the writer nothing, whilst it signified to those who accepted it massacre or the mines. Every country and every cause has never lacked these fiery but singularly prudent agitators. "I always shrink," continued Mr. Disraeli, "from any expression of political sentimentalism. I do not know any people who have suffered so much from political sentimentalism as the Poles. Year after year there have been people living in Paris and London, some of them in a state of

comparative luxury, stimulating their unfortunate countrymen in Poland to fruitless insurrection and to useless revolt; and all this time we have been favoured by them with expressions of feeling which, if expressions of feeling would effect the salvation of nations, have certainly been abundant and profuse." He concluded by entertaining the hope that since Russia was no longer the powerful nation she once was, and since England, France, and Austria, no longer the exhausted powers of 1814, were on the side of Poland, the policy recommended by Lord Castlereagh might at last be carried out. He thought this all the more probable since the Polish struggle differed materially from its preceding struggles. "In Poland we have," he said, "at present a sheer insurrection of the people against oppression. It is a movement not originated and not stimulated by foreign emissaries. It has not been created by conspiracies in other countries; it has not been fostered in order to promote local ambition or the objects of faction. It is a national movement; it possesses all the elements of a sacred cause, the love of a country, the memory of a glorious past, and as I hope and will believe, the inspiration of a triumphant future."

One of the consequences of this debate was to cause Earl Russell to pen a despatch to the English minister at St. Petersburg, stating that Her Majesty's government viewed with the deepest concern the condition of affairs then existing in Poland. "Great Britain," he said, "as a party to the treaty of 1815, and as a power deeply interested in the tranquillity of Europe, deems itself entitled to express its opinions upon the events now taking place, and is anxious to do so in the most friendly spirit towards Russia, and with a sincere desire to promote the interests of all parties concerned. Why does not His Imperial Majesty, whose benevolence is generally and cheerfully acknowledged, put an end at once to this bloody conflict, by proclaim-

ing mercifully an immediate and unconditional amnesty to his revolted Polish subjects, and at the same time announce his intention to replace without delay his kingdom of Poland in possession of the political and civil privileges which were granted to it by the Emperor Alexander I. in execution of the stipulations of the treaty of 1815? If this were done, a national Diet and a national administration would in all probability content the Poles and satisfy European opinion."

This communication had no effect; the insurrection still continued, and Russia did not stay her hand in suppressing with all the fierce brutality of the Muscovite nature the rising of her rebellious subjects. Later in the session Earl Russell, acting in concert with the cabinets of France and Austria, sent a second despatch to St. Petersburg, suggesting the recommendations of the English government as to the measures proper to be adopted by Russia in her future policy towards Poland. "Her Majesty's government," he said, "would deem themselves guilty of great presumption if they were to express an assurance that vague declarations of good intentions, or even the enactment of some wise laws, would make such an impression on the minds of the Polish people as to obtain peace and restore obedience. In present circumstances it appears to Her Majesty's government, that nothing less than the following outline of measures should be adopted as the bases of pacification:—(1) Complete and general amnesty. (2) National representation, with powers similar to those which are fixed by the charter of the 15th–27th November, 1815. (3) Poles to be named to public offices in such a manner as to form a distinct national administration having the confidence of the country. (4) Full and entire liberty of conscience; repeal of the restrictions imposed on Catholic worship. (5) The Polish language recognized in the kingdom as the official language, and used as such in the administration of the law and in education.

(6) The establishment of a regular and legal system of recruiting. These six points might serve as the indications of measures to be adopted, after calm and full deliberation. But it is difficult, nay, almost impossible, to create the requisite confidence and calm while the passions of men are becoming daily more excited, their hatreds more deadly, their determination to succeed or perish more fixed and immovable."

Before an answer was received to this despatch, Mr. Pope Hennessey had again moved for an address to the crown, praying for interference in Polish affairs. Mr. Disraeli made a few remarks on the occasion. He did not anticipate great results, he said, even if the propositions of the government were accepted by Russia; they would only bring about a state of things very similar to that which existed before, and which must be considered essentially of a provisional character. They did not, as it seemed to him, offer any solution of the difficulty. In his opinion there were only two solutions—the unity of the Russian empire, or the independence of Poland. These were two intelligible policies. No doubt, in discussion much might be said on both sides. The propositions of the government partook entirely of the character of mere diplomatic interference. They could do nothing; they could produce no effect whatever on the circumstances with which ministers had to deal. He could not say that the policy which the government had shadowed forth was one which was at all distinguished by prescience, by sagacity, or by that firmness which led to results. "He must be a very sanguine politician," concluded Mr. Disraeli, "who can suppose the propositions of Her Majesty's government will be accepted by Russia. If adopted, they can only raise a phantom of Polish independence, which in due course must lead again to a conjuncture such as we have to contend with at present; and no solution of the state of affairs which has periodically disturbed Europe appears to

me to be indicated in the policy of Her Majesty's government."

The verdict of the House was, however, on this occasion against continuing the debate until the country had been informed of the nature of the answers returned by Russia to the propositions of the government. As we know, Prince Gortschakoff declined to discuss in detail those propositions. "If Earl Russell," he wrote, "were exactly informed of what passes in the kingdom of Poland, he would know, as we do, that wherever the armed rebellion has striven to acquire substance, to give itself a visible head, it has been crushed. The masses have kept aloof from it, the rural population evinces even hostility to it, because the disorders by which agitators live ruin the industrial classes. The insurrection sustains itself only by a terrorism unprecedented in history. The principle of action of the directing committees from without is, to keep up agitation at all cost, in order to give food for the declamations of the press, to abuse public opinion, and to harass the governments, by furnishing an occasion and a pretext for a diplomatic intervention which should lead to military action. Desirable as it may be speedily to place a term to the effusion of blood, this object can only be attained by the insurgents throwing down their arms and surrendering themselves to the clemency of the emperor. Every other arrangement would be incompatible with the dignity of our august master, and with the sentiments of the Russian nation." In any case, the prince insisted on the re-establishment of order in Poland as an indispensable condition which must precede any application of the measures destined for the pacification of the kingdom.

A few days before the budget was introduced to parliament, the cabinet was somewhat suddenly deprived of one of its most important members. During the Easter recess Sir George Cornewall Lewis had caught a cold, which was followed by a bilious attack, under which he sank after

a brief illness of two days. From the very first his unwearied industry, his sound common sense, and the clear practical manner in which he treated all subjects intrusted to his care had marked him out for office. He was no orator; but halting and hesitating as were his words, it was felt that he was thoroughly the master of what he was discussing, and he was always listened to with the deepest attention. He had filled numerous posts in the government, and on the resignation of Lord Herbert of Lea had been appointed secretary of state for war. Outside parliament he was known as the author of various political and historical works, which are still held in high repute. Out of respect to his memory, the House of Commons adjourned on the day of his death. Though a political opponent, and one with whom there had been in the past not a few sharp passages of criticism, Mr. Disraeli seized the opportunity to say a few graceful words upon the sudden removal of the late statesman. "The queen," he said (April 15, 1863), "has lost one of the ablest of her servants, and this House has lost one of its members who, I am sure, possessed the universal regard and respect of all who knew him. I do not know the man who combined in so eminent a degree as Sir George Lewis, both from acquirement and from native power of thought, the faculty upon all public matters of arriving at a sound and thorough opinion. Although he was a man most remarkably free from prejudice and passion, that exemption from sentiments which are supposed in general to be necessary to the possession of active power had not upon him that effect which they generally exercise; and he was a man who, in all the transactions of life, brought a great organizing faculty and a great power of sustained perseverance to the transaction of public affairs. Sir, I am sure that the rising statesmen of both sides may take him as an example, that in many particulars may be remembered and followed with advantage; and I am quite sure that his

name will never be mentioned in this House without feelings of deep respect and regret for what may be deemed an untimely loss which I think the country could ill bear."

The financial statement, when introduced by Mr. Gladstone, created little discussion at the time it was brought forward. Mr. Gladstone stated his facts in a plain, business-like manner, and the leader of the Opposition refrained then from entering upon any detailed criticism as to the propositions laid before the House. It was only afterwards, when the budget began to be examined more closely, that discussion arose. Briefly the announcement made by the chancellor of the exchequer was as follows:—The estimated charge was £67,749,000, and the revenue £71,490,000. The duty on chicory and coffee was to be equalized; clubs were to be made liable to the duties payable for the sale of wines and spirits; and the exemption, under the Income-tax Acts, of corporate trust property and of charitable endowments was to be withdrawn. These additional taxes would amount to £133,000 a year, raising the estimated surplus to £3,874,000. Mr. Gladstone then proposed to reduce the duty on tea to 1s. per pound, to take 2d. per pound off the general rate of income tax, and to equalize the tax on incomes between £100 and £200. The surplus of £534,000 the government did not propose to part with, and Mr. Gladstone appealed to the committee to support them in retaining that amount in hand. Some of these proposals, as we shall see, encountered much opposition, and were eventually withdrawn.

On the occasion of the prime minister moving a resolution for the grant of £50,000, in addition to the £60,000 already collected by voluntary subscriptions, towards the expense of erecting a suitable memorial to the late Prince Consort, Mr. Disraeli availed himself of the opportunity, whilst cordially approving of the grant, again to refer (April 23, 1863) to the deceased prince. He approved of the design of a public memorial,

and explained why the public fund had been found to be insufficient for the purpose. "No one can doubt," said Mr. Disraeli, alluding to the death of the Prince Consort, "the real sympathy that pervaded the country when the great calamity occurred. Indeed, that is scarcely an adequate expression to describe the emotion; it was a feeling rather of anguish—anguish for the loss of the prince who was departed, and equally so for those who were left lone and desolate. I think there was upon that occasion every desire in the country to express, so far as its contributions could do so, the feelings of the nation. But it is to be observed, that at the moment the sympathy of the country was of a personal character. The loss was so sudden, so unexpected, that the natural emotions of the community were all directed to the personal character of him who had passed away. The peerless husband, the perfect father, the master whose yoke was gentleness, the wise and faithful counsellor of the sovereign who was his consort, these were the traits in the character of the prince that attached and appealed to all hearts; and while there was a general desire by public contributions to show a sense of those qualities, every community felt that it was equally a judge of those virtues with the metropolis; and there was an immense amount of local subscriptions which, although inconveniently, were naturally dedicated to the ornament or utility of the district in which the subscriptions were raised. For example, every person who had a benevolent scheme for raising an hospital or founding a school seized that opportunity of general sympathy and sorrow, and upon the merits of the prince whom we had lost, made a successful appeal for funds, which they would not otherwise have obtained. That is the reason why the public contributions were not of an amount adequate to carry out the object now desired. But as time drew on, something of the influence of posterity was exercised upon the opinion of the country;

and it became conscious that it had lost, not merely a man of virtuous and benignant character, who had exercised the fine qualities he possessed for the advantage of the community of which he was a prominent member, but it felt that it had lost a man of very original and peculiar character, who had exercised a great influence upon the age, and which it felt, as time advanced, would have been still more sensibly experienced. The character of Prince Albert was peculiar in this respect, that he combined two great qualities which are generally considered to be incompatible, and combined those qualities in a high degree. He united the faculty of contemplation with the talent of action, and was equally remarkable for profundity of thought and promptitude of organization. Add to these qualities all the virtues of the heart, and the House will see that the character thus composed was a very remarkable one. He brought this peculiar temperament to act upon the public mind for purposes of great moment, but of great difficulty. The task which the prince proposed to himself was to extend the knowledge, refine the taste, and enlarge the sympathies of a proud and ancient people. Had he not been gifted with deep thought and a singular facility and happiness of applying and mastering details, he could not have succeeded so fully as he did in those efforts, the results of which we shall find so much the greater as time goes on. Such being now the impression of the country—that we have lost, not simply an accomplished and benignant prince, but one of those minds which influence their age and mould the character of a people—a strong feeling prevails that a memorial should be raised in the metropolis of the empire. I believe that that desire is very general, and therefore the government has taken a course which the country is not only perfectly prepared for, but expected and required."

He could not agree, continued Mr. Disraeli, that the public contributions should be devoted to what was called

some purpose of utility. A purpose of utility meant that they should endow a charity, or erect a building, which might illustrate some isolated feeling and feature in the life of the prince. But a public memorial, such as the country required, should be of a universal and complete description. It should apply to the general sentiments of the country, and should represent as far as art could represent the full career of the man, so that future generations might behold a monument which should serve for their instruction and encouragement. "It should, as it were," concluded the speaker, "represent the character of the prince himself in the harmony of its proportions, in the beauty of its ornament, and in its enduring nature. It should be something direct, significant, and choice; so that those who come after us may say this is the type and testimony of a sublime life and a transcendent career, and thus they were recognized by a grateful and admiring people!"

Of all the proposals contained in the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer the one which encountered the keenest opposition, not only in the House but throughout the country, was the clause suggesting the taxation of charities. All the corporate interests were at once up in arms, and appealed to their powerful patrons to protect them against such an iniquitous encroachment upon their funds. Taxation of that kind, it was said, would be attended with the most deplorable results. Hospitals would be forced to reduce the number of their inmates; the resources of schools would be crippled; and the already slender allowances granted to the infirm, the sick, and the aged would have to be reduced to a sum which would scarcely be of any service to the recipient. Whilst advocating his proposal Mr. Gladstone had thought fit to indulge in the most violent invective against the deceased donors, from whose bequests the existing endowments had been derived. He abused the

motives of various of the donors and testators; he found great fault with many of the charitable institutions, and he openly charged several of those establishments with misapplication of the funds intrusted to their care and control. These strictures, coming from one who represented the university of Oxford, were rightly considered to be in the worst taste. Lord Robert Cecil, amid the approving cheers of the House, warmly denounced the conduct of Mr. Gladstone in supporting an unjust proposal by such vindictive and splenetic remarks. "The chancellor of the exchequer," he said, "from his position as representing a great university—a university which relied to a great extent for its endowments on the bequests of the dead—ought to have been able to appreciate with justice the motives by which the donors were actuated. He was speaking no sentiment, no idle phrase, but an historical fact, when he said it was not from spite, it was not from a petty desire to have their names written on white walls, not from a desire to be toasted at public dinners, that these great men made those dispositions to our charities. It was not his part to defend the tenets of a church to which he did not belong; but speaking for the dead, and as a matter of historical notoriety, everybody who heard him well knew that those who left those great estates deemed that they served the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men; they were not animated by any of those mean and petty motives which had been attributed to them; they obeyed the idea of the age in which they lived, and followed the dictates of the religion in which they believed. It did seem too much, after generation on generation had enjoyed the benefits of their bequests, that a statesman should come forward in this day, and because those bequests did not suit or square with the symmetrical theories in which he believed, or the hard and material philosophy to which he had devoted himself, should attempt to besmear the memories of the

testators by ascribing to them motives that were foreign to their souls."

On the morning of the day (May 4, 1863) when the proposal was to be submitted to the committee of the House of Commons, one of the most influential deputations that ever attended upon a minister had an interview with Mr. Gladstone at his official residence. It was introduced by the Duke of Cambridge, and was composed of the two archbishops, several bishops, various archdeacons, many members of both Houses of Parliament, and all the treasurers and secretaries of the chief charities in the metropolis. The chancellor of the exchequer listened to the arguments of the various speakers, and then said that he would reserve his defence of the proposal until the scheme was formally introduced to the House in the evening.

When the subject came before the committee, it was evident that the unpopular proposal was doomed. The feeling of the House was strongly against it; and as Mr. Gladstone, with all his plausibility, with all his eloquence, and with all the shrewish spite with which he fights a losing battle, defended his scheme, murmurs of strong disapprobation were aroused on both sides of the chamber. The chancellor of the exchequer considered that his proposal was a wise one, and with regard to the great mass of charitable property, an equitable compromise. He calculated that the exemption of charities from the income tax entailed a loss upon the revenue of fully £250,000 a year. That allowance to charities was virtually an expenditure kept out of view and not under the control of parliament, which was left as to that great expenditure entirely in the dark, and he asked why that promiscuous gift of £250,000 should be continued? With regard to the statement that if the hospitals were compelled to pay income tax they must either close some of their wards or reduce their beds, he said with some truth:—"It was not my intention to make any

remarks on the management of hospitals of this kind, which we must all regard with so much favour and respect; but when at every turn the threat is flung in my face that if this measure is carried out the number of patients must be diminished, then I am obliged to give it particular consideration. I do not believe that the beds of patients will be reduced. Those who, in the case of the protected trades, declared that if protection were withdrawn they must dismiss so many of their workmen, were not men who told lies. They really believed what they said, but were not aware that more economical arrangements would enable them to keep these workmen, pursue their trade, and make larger profits than before. One of the great evils of the present system is, that while you bestow public money on these establishments you dispense with all public control over them, and thus annul all effective motives for economy. Endowed institutions laugh at public opinion. The press knows nothing of their expenditure; parliament knows nothing of it. It is too much to say that hospitals are managed by angels and archangels, and do not, like the rest of humanity, stand in need of supervision, criticism, and rebuke. Therefore, even in the case of St. Bartholomew's I object to an exemption which, by its very nature, at once removes the principal motives for economical management. When the managers tell me that the exaction of £820 will compel them to dismiss 500 patients, I am entitled to ask, Why then do you spend £220 in a feast? What right have you to eat up in an hour 150 beds? I confess I am amazed at the skill with which my opponents have put their best foot foremost. Their tactics and strategy have been admirable, but their case will not bear close scrutiny. What are the circumstances of Guy's, of St. Thomas's, and similar establishments? Every year they are able to place £3000 or £4000 each in reproductive investments in land. They

are thinking, not merely of the sick, but of their own future aggrandizement and extension. I was informed the other day that St. Thomas's spends fifteen per cent. of its income in improvements on land. Well, then, it is a matter for the state to consider, whether the indefinite enrichment of such corporations—even of those instituted for the best of purposes—when entirely removed from the control of public opinion, the press, or parliament, is to go on without limit, and is to be augmented by contributions from the public purse. I do not believe that a single patient will be dismissed from one of the hospitals of London, if this proposal is agreed to; but if there were the slightest apprehension of such an occurrence, private charity would at once prevent it."

As speaker after speaker rose to oppose the proposal—and it was plain that the sense of the House was strongly against the measure—Mr. Gladstone, towards the close of the evening, came forward and suggested that the objectionable clause should be withdrawn. To Mr. Disraeli this announcement appeared sound and rational; still the violent opinions promulgated by the chancellor of the exchequer ought not, he thought, to be allowed to pass unnoticed. "The right hon. gentleman," he said (May 4, 1863), "introduced a short time ago his general financial statement. When I listened to it I was anxious it should pass, as to its main features, with no organized opposition; and I contented myself that in the course of discussion that would arise, the objectionable portion of it would disappear or be withdrawn without being painfully obtruded on the consideration of the House. I was anxious for this for the honour of the House of Commons, because the budget introduced by the right hon. gentleman was in its main features the budget of the House of Commons. Last year the House was called upon—I will not stop to inquire by whom or on what side of the House he may sit—to consider whether it was not expedient

to counsel the government that a considerable reduction was essential in the public expenditure, seeing by that means alone a reduction of taxation could be attained. We were then told that the reduction of the expenditure by any considerable amount was quite illusory; that no one could venture to touch the expenses of the army or the navy; and that the man was guilty of subserviency and servility to France who could for a moment, and in however moderate terms, insist on the wisdom, the policy, and the possibility of such a course. This session has brought forward a different view of public affairs. Economy is possible. It is not now subserviency or servility to France to obtain by most legitimate means a reduction of the burdens of the people. And I say, that for this great measure of reduction brought forward by the government, we are indebted to the House of Commons, and not to the government. It is the House of Commons that has reduced the tea duty and the income tax; and in these main features the budget is the budget of the House of Commons."

He regretted, however, continued Mr. Disraeli, that in this House of Commons' budget Mr. Gladstone should have introduced, as if to vindicate his claim to financial originality, some remarkable measures of eccentric invention to the wonder of an admiring parliament. He had taxed carriers, he had taxed clubs; but the taxation of charities was a novelty the most unnecessary and objectionable of all. Mr. Gladstone had stated that if charities were exempted from taxation, such exemption was to be looked upon as a donation from the state. Mr. Disraeli declined to admit the truth of that assertion; it was a principle utterly false in its premises, and equally fallacious in its consequences. The income tax was a tax on persons, and not on property; "being a tax on persons, we are naturally asked, why are those persons to be liable to the tax who are not enjoying that amount of income which

you exempt under the general regulation of the income tax, whilst others enjoying the same or a greater income are free?" The answer was that those persons were to be made liable because Mr. Gladstone chose to entertain views of the endowments of the country different from those which had influenced parliament during the last century and a half, and entirely opposed to the convictions and requirements of the country.

"And what," inquired Mr. Disraeli, "is the remedy of the chancellor of the exchequer for all those evils—for all that vicious principle which is the foundation of the endowments of England, for all that mismanagement, for all that impolitic state of affairs which he denounces with so much power? What is his remedy for the enormous imperfections in the old bequests—for the evils in those petty charities which he has called forth from their obscure existence—for the abuses connected with those magnificent foundations of hospitals and colleges which have contributed so much to the promotion of education and the development of benevolence in this country? Why, it is the application of the income tax! The condition of our charities has for thirty years, more or less, attracted the attention of the legislature. The crown has issued commissions and parliament has appointed committees, the labours of which have been eminently judicious and useful. I should doubt, therefore, under any circumstances, whether it was necessary or expedient on the part of the government to call public attention to the character of those institutions, with a view to any change in their management or character. But if the government are of opinion that those endowments are so injurious to the public weal; if they think that the statement of the chancellor of the exchequer is justified by the facts; and that this is a question which demands our immediate and careful attention—though there is nothing to justify such a conclusion in

what we see at present—they should have brought the subject forward in such a shape that we might have dealt with it in a satisfactory manner. It is totally inadequate to hold out to us as a sufficient means of remedial agency, that we should apply the income tax to those institutions.

"I think that every point which the chancellor of the exchequer has raised, and which he has placed before us with all the exertions of his ingenious casuistry, has entirely failed; and they have failed because they all spring from one principle, the foundation of which is entirely illusory—from the false assumption that exemption from taxation is essentially unjust. But the course which, on this assumption, has been taken appears to me to be monstrous; and I am not surprised that the country and the House, even in so short a space of time as has elapsed since the right hon. gentleman made his financial statement, should have been excited and risen, as it were, in agitation against such a proposition. It offends all the feelings of tradition which have been cherished in this country, all our local associations, all that veneration for the principle of inheritance, to which we have so long adhered. We have heard arguments to-night which have been a denunciation of endowments, and almost an appeal for confiscation. That this proposition should have been introduced as part of a financial scheme is indeed amazing; that it should have been introduced for so slight a financial object is still more astonishing; but when it was in the power of the government, not of their own happy imagining, but following the strong sense of the country as represented in the House of Commons, to effect those great reductions of taxation which our advice and public opinion had indicated, that they should have thought fit, under such circumstances, unnecessarily to introduce the discussion of principles which disturb almost the foundation of society, does appear to me to be a course of conduct

which the most brilliant rhetoric cannot justify, and which, I think, may lead to consequences which the government may hereafter regret. Sir, I shall only hope that this remarkable proposition, introduced with so much pomp and withdrawn in a manner so unpretending, may be the last of the endeavours that will be made to attack the endowments of this country, which the wisdom of the times in which we live may improve by the application of the principles on which they are founded. Commissions and committees have already produced ample suggestions for that object, but the endowments themselves are founded upon a principle that has contributed to the greatness of this country, and which, I trust, this country will always cherish."

The objectionable clause was then withdrawn. A similar fate befell the proposal to tax clubs and the other suggestions of an equally petty and irritating character. Finally the budget, which was indeed, as Mr. Disraeli called it, a "House of Commons' budget," since it was the House of Commons which had suggested its leading features and had eliminated its objectionable clauses, passed through committee and was accepted by parliament.

After the financial discussions, the most interesting debates during the session of 1863 were those which touched upon religious matters. For some time past it had been a matter of grievance that prisoners confined in our gaols who happened to profess a creed other than that of the Church of England, were deprived altogether, unless under certain special conditions which were seldom acted upon, of religious consolation unless they consented to attend to the ministrations of the prison chaplain, who was always a member of the Anglican church. The Roman Catholic prisoner, during his term of confinement, found himself shut out from the solace of confession and from all priestly aid and advice. The nonconformist prisoner, on the few occasions when he found himself within the walls of a gaol, was in the same

unhappy plight as his popish companion; with him no dissenting minister was permitted to pray, or by exhortations to attempt to lead him from the vicious paths of his old life. To remove these offensive restrictions, and as an effectual remedy against this piece of mediæval intolerance, Sir George Grey brought in a bill—the Prison Ministers Bill—which was to grant to the inmates of prisons not being members of the established church the benefit of the attendance of divines of their own religious persuasion. "Let my hon. friends," said Sir George on introducing his measure, "who object to the provisions of this bill, suppose they were members of a Protestant minority in a community composed chiefly of Catholics, living under a Catholic government, and that persons professing their own religious faith, from their circumstances in life, from the peculiar temptations to which they were subjected, or from any other causes, composed a considerable proportion of the criminal population of the country. Would it be satisfactory to them, or would it be a sufficient answer to them when they asked that adequate provision should be made for the religious instruction of those persons, to be told that all prisoners were placed by law under the exclusive care of Catholic priests, but that they might be visited by Protestant ministers if they made a special request, though even those visits would not exempt them from repeated personal intercourse with Roman Catholic priests, with whom it would rest what books were provided for their instruction? That would be a state of the law anything but satisfactory to my hon. friends; they would refuse to acquiesce in any such arrangements; and how, then, can we expect our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen to be contented with the state of the law which I have now described, or how can we think them unreasonable in pressing for some change?"

The real hostility which the bill had to encounter was from the extreme Protestant party. It was admitted that the proportion

of dissenters who would benefit by the bill was very small, and therefore the scheme of Sir George Grey was looked upon as in effect a measure for sanctioning the employment of Roman Catholic priests in our gaols. The sensitive Protestantism of the country took alarm. The Liberals were in favour of the bill, the Conservatives were divided; some giving their adhesion to the measure, and others stoutly opposing it. Yet the bill introduced no new principle. In the army the Roman Catholic soldiers enjoyed the ministrations of a priest, whose services were paid for by the state. To the military prisons a Roman Catholic priest was attached. Why deprive the civilian of what the soldier enjoyed? It was also urged that in Ireland there was a paid Protestant chaplain in every prison, though there might not be a single Protestant in the cells. The bill of Sir George Grey proposed to empower the magistrates to appoint Roman Catholic chaplains in prisons, to appropriate out of the rates a reasonable remuneration, and to have authority to dismiss the priests when necessary. The opponents of the measure declared that such a bill was uncalled for and unnecessary; it would sanction a Roman Catholic priest in every prison in the country; it would endanger the rights of the established church, and would clothe the magistrates with a new power.

These opponents were almost to a man on the Conservative side of the House, and Mr. Disraeli used all his arguments and eloquence to prove to his friends that the fears they entertained were groundless. Intolerance in all its forms was always hateful to the leader of the Opposition; he was sprung from a race which had too long been the victim of persecution for him to have sympathy with narrow-minded prejudices, or a harsh and debasing policy. He admitted (April 20, 1863) that the objections to the bill were not of a light character; but on the other hand, the arguments in favour of the measure recommended themselves, not merely on the ground of expediency, but of justice.

Therefore he would claim from all who took part in the debate the exercise of a spirit of forbearance. There were two great objections urged against the bill. One was that it affected injuriously the status of the Church of England. He held quite the contrary opinion. "Sir," he said, "if I thought this measure had even a tendency to impair the authority of the Church of England I should oppose it. In this age, when the elements of government are daily diminishing, when the power of governing nations is every day weakening, it would be most unwise to impair the influence of an institution that has contributed in so eminent and beneficial a manner to the formation of that English character, which after all is the best security for the preservation of all we most value. And I cannot conceal from my own conviction that the time may come, and is even nearer than many imagine, when in our peril and perplexity we may find a guide and guardian in that institution which, by the services thus rendered to us, will establish fresh claims to the confidence and gratitude of the country. Happily, in my opinion, for this country the still existing privileges of the Church of England are great and manifold; but this should always be remembered—that the privileges of the Church of England, entirely in theory and greatly still in practice, embody and represent popular rights. That is the source of their strength. I cannot myself see what popular right is represented by the Church of England exercising an arbitrary power to prevent the captive, who is not in her communion, from enjoying the consolations of his religion. Sir, I say that, on the contrary, such a policy is injurious to the Church of England. It is the interest of the Church of England, it is the interest of all ecclesiastical institutions, and indeed of all religious bodies, to favour the development of the religious principle—to cherish, encourage, and nurture those spiritual influences which hitherto have controlled and regulated man."

The second objection to the measure was, continued Mr. Disraeli, even of a graver character. It was said that the measure was dangerous to the Protestant spirit of the country. No one could deny the strength and power of that spirit, and was it to be said that a bill of that nature would put in jeopardy the Protestant interests of the country? It was surely forming a mean conception of the Church of England, and taking a poor view of their Protestant spirit, to suppose that such a measure could possibly endanger the one or diminish the other? Such an opinion he could not for a moment entertain. The bill before them was one to do justice, not merely to the Roman Catholic prisoner, but to the Protestant community. "On what possible ground," he asked, "after having adopted those principles with regard to the treatment of criminals which have been confirmed by a long series of legislation, can you justify it to Protestant England, that there shall be in the gaols of the country a considerable portion of the penal population whom you will take no care to reform, and whom you are prepared periodically to let loose to ravage society, unchanged by the influences of religion?" He hoped the House would pass the measure. It was a measure in harmony with all the legislation which the House had of late years sanctioned on those subjects. The objections of those who opposed it might have had their value before the time of Catholic emancipation, or before the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act; but such objections were useless now. The privileges of the Church of England represented popular rights, and so long as they represented popular rights national sympathy would always rally round that great institution. The power of the Church of England and the Protestant feeling of the country would not be maintained by a course of action inconsistent with all their previous legislation, which, by placing obstacles in the way of ameliorating the character and condition of their criminal

population, must produce consequences injurious to society at large.

The bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 152 to 122, and the third reading by about an equal majority. In the House of Lords the numbers were for the second reading 65, and against it 35. The bill ultimately received the royal assent.

During this session Sir John Trelawny, undeterred by past defeats, though somewhat in a desponding tone, again introduced his bill to abolish church-rates, but after a brief discussion it was rejected by a majority of ten. Mr. Disraeli did not speak on this occasion. He was not in the habit of repeating himself, and he had uttered all he had to say on the subject; but from the result of the division we see how faithfully his advice had been followed, and what a difference there had been in the reception of the measure since he had strenuously advocated its rejection. The counsel given at Amersham had certainly not been in vain. In 1855 the second reading of the bill for abolishing church-rates was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of twenty-eight; in 1856 by forty-three; in 1858 by fifty-three; in 1859 by seventy-four; in 1860 by twenty-nine. In 1861, the votes being equal, the bill was lost by the casting vote of the speaker; in 1862 it was negatived by a majority of one; and in 1863 by a majority of ten. It was the powerful influence of the leader of the Opposition which had thus turned the scale.

Upon the third measure, affecting the authority and position of the Church of England, which was introduced this session, Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length. To many of the clergy who were students of science, and who were under the influence of the rationalism flowing from the fountain-head of Germany, the subscription to the Articles was eminently distasteful. To the man who believed in miracles by explaining them away, who had his own views as to the inspiration of Holy Writ, and whose

opinions were somewhat peculiar as to the doctrine of the Atonement, the nature of the sacraments, and the efficacy of any fixed creed, the policy and obligations of the Act of Uniformity were far from acceptable. The matter came before parliament, and led to a most interesting debate. Mr. Buxton moved "That in the opinion of this House the subscription required from the clergy to the Thirty-nine Articles and to the Prayer-book ought to be relaxed." He did not bring forward his motion, said Mr. Buxton, in a spirit hostile to the Church of England, for his main object was to relieve the clergy from what many of them felt to be a grievous burden. It was only to the essential, fundamental doctrines of the church that a general assent could be expected; and if subscriptions were abolished, it would be understood that nothing more was required than a general conformity to those fundamental doctrines. The church should be built upon a broad and tolerant basis, and in these days of culture and scientific discovery it was unwise to restrict the spirit of inquiry.

"It was not to be supposed," Mr. Buxton said, "that while the minds of men were ranging freely over every other region of thought, one great field of truth should be tabooed, and tabooed to those very men who were to be teachers and guides of the people. Why, the clergy ought to lead the religious thought of the age. They ought to be ever widening and deepening the knowledge of the people in Christian truth; but the tendency of those restrictions was to hold them in, and force them to follow with timid steps far behind the public intelligence. That was not the true position in which the church should stand, and the danger was that it might thus become severed from the intelligence of the country. The truth was, that owing to the ecclesiastical causes that had been tried, and the judgments that had been delivered, the subscriptions had become far more stringent than formerly. The doctrines of the church had unhappily grown more precisely

definite; and meanwhile men's minds had been learning far greater daring in dealing with truth, and uniformity of belief had become every day less possible. Be that good or evil, no folly could be greater than that of trying to stay that stir of mind with such wretched barriers as these. If the church still required from young men such an abnegation of all mental freedom, the worthiest would be the first to shrink from such a degrading bondage. Now the cry—the stale and shallow cry—would doubtless be raised of 'The church in danger.' It was wonderful how those who boasted to be the friends of the church could think so ill of her as to fancy that, were she not fenced in here and shored up there, she would totter to her fall. During our own time it seemed to him she had been growing, and was still growing, more powerful, more beneficent, and more beloved. To her might be applied the words of the poet—

'Higher yet her star ascends;
Traveller, blessedness and light,
Peace and truth, her course portends.'

And yet there was danger to the church! Two policies were open to her: if she chose to be, not national, but narrow and sectarian; if she drove from her the intellect of the age; if she stubbornly withstood all progress, all reform; if she met the irresistible advance of the human mind, the inevitable growth of religious opinion, the novelties of speculation, the discoveries of science, not with strong and gentle reasoning, but with paroxysms of fear and rage; if she displayed that, which was of all things the most pitiful, the longing to persecute without the power—then, indeed, the day might come when, alienated from all that was most profound in thought and most generous in feeling, she might find herself forsaken and spurned by the English people. A far other career, he believed, was before her. Let men of mind find with her a welcome and a home; let her open her gates wider, and shake off the bonds that cramped her; let her move onward with the age, and lead the van of

its religious thought; let her deal tenderly with error, and grapple boldly with truth; and let her ministers be still foremost in every work of mercy. In short, instead of trusting to outward props, the handiwork of men, let her grow ever more glorious within, more pure, more noble, more profound; then they need not doubt that their children's children would still cleave to the church which their fathers founded and sealed with their blood in the great days of old."

Sir George Grey, upon Mr. Monckton Milnes having withdrawn an amendment, moved the "previous question;" he was followed by Mr. Walpole, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Robert Cecil. The debate was brought to a close (June 9, 1863) by Mr. Disraeli. After regretting that the motion of Mr. Buxton had been met with the previous question, he said:—"No one is more in favour of the comprehensive character of the Church of England than myself; but I would make this condition, that the comprehensiveness of the Church of England should be based on church principles. The hon. gentleman, the member for Maidstone [Mr. Buxton], as others before him have done, pointed out the origin of the Act of Charles II., to which he supposes such injurious effects upon the comprehensive character of the church may be ascribed. He has shown us how many, who might be included in the pale of the church, are no longer found in its fold; and he has denounced the ancient legislation, the consequences of which may be found in our present situation. I doubt very much the general justice of this criticism, and I doubt whether it was possible at that time, or at any time in this country, or perhaps in any country, to prevent in matters of religion what is called dissent. I look upon dissent as a weakness incident to humanity. Look at the case of the Roman Catholic religion. I will be bound I could show, if it were necessary, that there has been as much dissent, as much heresy, as much schism in the Church of Rome, as in the

Church of England. But the dissent has occasionally been forcibly suppressed, the schism has in some instances been adroitly managed, and the heresy has found a safety-valve in the institution sometimes even of monastic orders. You have found this in a religion established on the principle of infallibility, and in countries where that religion has been supported by the civil power, assuming generally an arbitrary character. What, then, can we expect in a country where, instead of infallibility, religion is founded upon the principle of free inquiry, and where, though that religion has generally speaking been supported by the civil power, that civil power has yet been established on the principle of civil liberty?

"It is only as politicians and as statesmen that we may presume to speak in this House upon this subject; and I maintain that in modern times, since that year 1662, which has just been quoted to the House, no English statesman has ever contemplated that the Church of England, though founded on a catholic creed, should at same time command a catholic communion. For the last 200 years no statesman has contemplated that the whole population of England should be within the pale of the national church. What has been contemplated in these centuries of what I may call the practical working of our constitution, has been this—that there should be a standard of religious truth established by the state in the country; that the religious principle should be recognized as one of the most important and influential in the conduct of government; that the government of this country should not be reduced to a mere question of police, but that we should seek to influence the conduct of men by the highest sanction which can be conceived. Sir, I say that object has been successfully accomplished by the church, in its connection with the state in England, during the last two centuries. We have to-night a new system commended to our notice, which is to bring about a state of affairs more com-

prehensive. The first principle of this new system is, that not only the creed of the church should be catholic, but that the communion should be catholic, and that we should all belong to the same church—a doctrine not very favourable at the outset to that principle of religious liberty which, I believe, is still much esteemed in this country. When you analyze this doctrine it comes to this—The comprehensive church is, in fact, to be a church founded very much on the same principles as that federal constitution of America, of which in this House we have heard so much and so often, and with regard to which recently we have witnessed such strange and startling experience. All creeds are to belong to one church, but all creeds are to retain their own particular opinions. But that experiment has been tried to a great degree on the Continent of Europe. You have had it in Germany; you may see its effects to a certain degree in France; and you may trace them not only in Europe, but in America. You have what without offence may be called an infidel church, composed of various sections of the population, some of them often influenced by fanatical impulses. If on the Continent such an experiment has not been over-successful, what are our chances of success in England, where feelings on religious subjects are so deep and enthusiastic? No one can doubt that the consequences would be of a perilous character, perhaps disastrous to the state, and entailing results which none would dare to contemplate, and all must wish to avoid. Therefore, I very much doubt whether this system of comprehension on which the relaxation of these tests is recommended is a sound one. A church may be so comprehensive that no one may comprehend it.”

Nor was there, asserted Mr. Disraeli, anything alarming in the scepticism now prevalent—nothing certainly to cause the Act of Uniformity to be altered. “A century and a half ago,” he continued, “at a time when England was in a state of

great civilization, these views were very prevalent in this country—much more prevalent than at present. It was a natural reaction from that immense triumph of Puritanism which had destroyed the institutions of the country, and which apparently had effected an enduring change in the national character. That Puritanic spirit passed away, however, and left behind, as a consequence, great latitudinarianism, ending in a general spirit of scepticism. The state of things was far more alarming then than now. The most alarming thing now, it is said, is that an infidel may be made a bishop;* but infidels then were actually made bishops. There was at that time a large body of the ablest writers and most eminent men that England ever produced devoted with greater courage, and in a far more unblushing manner than is now the fashion, to the propagation of those ideas which are now circulated with more modesty, and perhaps with a more timid spirit. You had men of high position, ministers of state, and other distinguished persons among the educated and influential classes of society, adopting these opinions in the reign of George I. What happened? A century passed away, and what permanent effect was produced by these opinions, although they produced a literature of their own, which was second to none in acuteness and learning, and although they were sanctioned by persons in high places? What have been the consequences, I will not say to the Church of England, but to the faith accepted by that church? Why, there never was a period in which the religion of this country, and especially the religion embalmed in the offices of the Church of England, was more influential, or more expansive, or flourished more than in the century that has elapsed since that time. And I defy any one to bring me passages impugning the faith of the Scriptures in any works recently published, in which these doctrines are urged with more power

* An allusion to the Colenso case.

or more learning than by the writers of that period.

"But then it may be said that England is an insular country, and that Englishmen are a peculiar people; that they have an aristocracy, and a church possessing territorial power; that the middle classes are bigoted, and the aristocratic classes interested in preserving the church; and that by a combination of circumstances it has happened that a natural result has not been attained. But we have seen the same causes at work on a much larger scale, and at a period more recent, in a neighbouring country—a country that is not insular, that has destroyed its aristocracy, subverted its priesthood, plundered its church, and left no prizes to be competed for in it. We have heard that the reason why there are less candidates for orders in the Church of England is that so many prizes have been taken away. But what happened in the Church of France when all its property had been taken? The whole institutions of the land, ecclesiastical and otherwise, were erased; yet as if by magic, parish churches have re-appeared in the 30,000 districts of France; and although they have had monarchies, empires, and republics, and may have in the future a combination of government which no one can anticipate, yet the Christian church in that country counts at present more powerful and more numerous adherents than ever. Therefore, I say, that it is a great mistake, and an opinion not sanctioned by experience, to suppose that we are encountering a novel and revolutionary phase of opinion; and that in consequence of views which have before this been advanced, have flourished, and then disappeared, the House of Commons is to meet in a panic to revise the great title-deeds of the Church of England, and to say in this hasty moment of the introduction of a new philosophy that the measures taken by the great statesmen and churchmen of the days of the Stuarts at an important crisis were a profound mistake, seeing that they have only secured

for England two centuries of tranquillity and repose! Totally repudiating as materials for legislation on such a subject the passing accidents of the hour, which, however, naturally influence the youthful mind of the country, I will make one remark on the character of the subscription, and on the creeds and articles which are now brought forward as unsuited to the age in which we live. . . . I have not heard from any of the speakers any objection or insinuation against the wisdom of maintaining the church of this country. Well, but what do you mean by a church? I say, No creed! no church! How can you have a church without a creed, articles, formularies, and a subscription? If you object to a creed, to formularies, and to articles, tell us so, and then we shall understand the question before us. We will discuss that question, and the nation must decide which side they will adopt. But if you are to have a church, I maintain you must have symbols of union among those who are in communion with that church. That, I hope, is not bigotry, for we must speak on this subject as politicians, and not intrude our private religious convictions on any member of this House, but consider this weighty matter with reference to the happiness of society, and the means of lofty and virtuous government, by the aid of which we may prevent government from degenerating into a mere machinery of police.

"We are agreed, then, that we shall have a church, and that it shall be maintained. Well, I want to know how are we to have a church without a symbol of union among those who are in communion with it? No one has told us. If we are to have a church without articles, creeds, or formularies, we shall have the most pernicious and the most dangerous institution which ever yet existed in any country, the means of which for evil, under the disposition of able men, are entirely incalculable. . . . I agree with the chancellor of the exchequer—every man

of temperate mind must agree with him—that neither the Articles of the church nor the Prayer-book are perfect. There may be blots in their composition. The Prayer-book may be divine, but it is also human. But I do not see anything in the present state of affairs that justifies the course taken by government. Suppose there were circumstances that justified the course taken by the hon. member for Maidstone, is the course taken by the government that which they ought to follow? I do not think it is. If this House be ever of opinion that the title-deeds of the church require to be revised, in however modified a manner, it does appear to me that the inquiry should not originate in either House of Parliament. It has been said in the course of this debate that the Act of Uniformity at present in question is an Act of parliament, and that as it originated in parliament, its revision and formal reconstruction ought to take place there. With regard to that, I say the character of parliament in the reign of Charles II. and of Victoria is decidedly and essentially different. Parliament is no longer a lay synod, and therefore it cannot of right and with propriety assume such a function. No doubt, if a revision were to take place, the opinion of parliament must ultimately be given on the general merits of the question. But it would not enter into every ecclesiastical detail and religious difference of opinion, if for no other reason, from that innate sense of propriety which always guides it. But, I say, if revision be necessary, it is from the temporal head of our church that measure should flow, and by the queen, and by the queen alone, it should be indicated. A royal commission is the proper medium by which any change which may be necessary either in the Articles or Liturgy of the church could alone be brought under the consideration of authority.

“‘What authority?’ The hon. member for Poole (Mr. Henry Seymour) says, ‘Who would trust the discussion of this question to convocation? I regret that convocation has

ever been called into existence, and I trust its attributes and functions will soon be terminated.’ [*Cheers from below the gangway on the government side.*] I cannot agree with that opinion; I cannot sympathize with that cheer. It seems to me—and I say it with the greatest courtesy—extremely bigoted and narrow-minded. Why should convocation be silenced? Convocation is a representative body, and should therefore recommend itself to the Liberal party; it is a body which carries on its affairs by public discussion, and therefore should be regarded, I think, with some respect by those who are devoted to reformed parliaments. And I must say this of convocation: I admit that, as at present constituted, there are elements which render convocation not altogether a satisfactory tribunal. But it does not follow that convocation should be therefore altogether abrogated. Let us be just to convocation. It was recalled into existence after a long lapse of time;* it was unused to the functions which it was summoned to exercise; it consisted entirely of clergymen, and loud were the predictions that it would fail, and fail ignominiously. But I ask sensible and temperate men on both sides of the House, is it fair to give that character to the labours of convocation since it has been revived? I say myself, revived as it has been after a long desuetude, trammelled as it has been, checked and controlled as it has been in a manner that would have broken the spirit and crushed

* It was in the year 1851 that the agitation commenced to revive convocation. A clerical meeting was held in Freemason's Hall, January 14, 1851, to address the crown for the revival of Convocation. The two houses of convocation met February 5, 1851, but on the Lower House attempting to discuss a petition to the archbishop, lamenting the suppression of synodical action, the assembly was prorogued. In the House of Lords, July 11, 1851, Lord Redesdale urged the revival of convocation; he was supported by the Archbishops of London and Oxford, and opposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who feared that such revival would engender dissensions and controversy. It was through the action of the Conservative party that convocation was revived. When Lord Derby was in power in 1852 he advised the crown to issue a license permitting convocation to resume its synodical functions; accordingly convocation assembled November 5, 1852, “for the despatch of divers urgent business.” The last meeting of convocation before this date was in the year 1717.

the energies of any assembly, it has done many things deserving approval, and what is more, has done that which all predicted it would not do in the brief term it has been permitted to exercise its powers—it has shown an extremely practical character. I would wish its basis were more comprehensive, and I cannot see how any appeal could be made to convocation on such a question as that which has formed the subject of controversy to-night, unless that basis were more comprehensive. You must associate with it the other province and the Church of Ireland, and I myself think you ought to introduce something of that lay element to which the Church of England has been so much indebted. Nor do I doubt that there are lay members of the church at the present moment who, from their learning, their knowledge of men, and their high character, might bring to convocation such ability and reputation as Selden and Chillingworth might have brought in former days. But if it be the opinion of government that it is necessary to revise the Liturgy and Articles, they ought to proceed, not by moving the previous question, but by the initiatory act of the crown whom they counsel; and after a royal commission had been instituted and had terminated its labours, the result might with propriety be submitted to a convocation constituted on the broad basis I have indicated. It may be said these are difficult questions; but it is the province of government to cope with difficulties; and whatever the decision arrived at might be, it would be ultimately laid before parliament, for no one contemplates that any decision upon such subjects would be satisfactory unless parliament were consulted.

"We have heard to-night from the hon. member for Pontefract [Mr. Monckton Milnes] a warning not to submit to a sacerdotal despotism. I entirely agree with the hon. gentleman that no evil can perhaps be conceived for any country, but at all events none for a country like England, greater than to fall under a sacerdotal despotism,

or that we should be at all interfered with in our free life by any priestly power. But it appears to me that the hon. member for Pontefract has entirely misapprehended the question upon which he proposed an amendment, and which one would think he did not resolve on until he had given sufficient consideration to the subject. Sir, my idea of a sacerdotal despotism, in the times in which we live, is not that the Inquisition will appear in this country, or that Archbishop Laud, in the form of the mild and benignant metropolitan of Lambeth, may summon us again to a high commission court. But my idea of sacerdotal despotism is this, that a minister of the Church of England, who is appointed to expound doctrine, should deem that he has a right to invent doctrine. That, sir, is the sacerdotal despotism I fear. And it appears to me, that if the course which has been recommended to our consideration to-night is adopted, in that false guise in which such propositions are sometimes exhibited in this House and out of it, we shall not be secure from arriving at such a goal. I warn the House, however improbable it may appear from the seemingly innocent form in which these simple and enlightened propositions have been brought before us, that they are propositions in favour of the priesthood, and not of the laity; and the more their consequences are traced, the more plainly that will be found to be the inevitable result. No doubt there are men of genius among the clergy, fine writers, men of learning and imagination, who can easily picture to themselves what would be the consequence of the success of these endeavours. No doubt the mere clergyman would soon become a prophet. No doubt you would have many churches; and the abounding eloquence, the exquisite learning, the fine sentiment, and the admirable ingenuity, which pervade many of the publications which are put upon our tables, would produce consequences to the Church of England very different from what have proceeded from this reviled Act

of Uniformity. But what I feel is this—if that course be pursued, I see no security for 200 years of tranquillity and toleration. I see no security for 200 years which have resolved as great a problem in spiritual life as we have in political. It is the boast of this country that in politics it has reconciled order with liberty. What in its religious affairs is a greater triumph than this—it has combined orthodoxy with toleration. What security have you for such results if you pursue the course which is insidiously recommended to you now in so many ways and by so many changes? I prefer to stand upon the ancient ground. I see no reason whatever why, if the occasion demands it, our attention should not be duly called to necessary changes in our Articles and Liturgy. But though I see no reason, if the occasion requires it, why that should not be done, I can most sincerely say that hitherto no satisfactory case has been made out in favour of that course. I prefer to stand as we are—on a church which lives in the historic conscience of the country, which comes down with the title-deeds of its great Liturgy which we all can understand, because our fathers and our forefathers have contributed to its creation. Sir, I regret the course which we have taken to-night, although I trust, after this discussion, it will not be misunderstood, and that the country will feel that it is the determination of parliament to stand in its spirit by the Church of England."

The "previous question" having been put and carried, the resolution of Mr. Buxton fell to the ground.

Looking back upon the past, Mr. Disraeli had no reason to despair of the future of Conservatism. Under his guidance, and impregnated with his teaching, the Conservative party had been slowly but steadily developing into a united and powerful organization. Discarding the Toryism so fashionable in the early part of the nineteenth century, which based its foreign policy upon the articles of the treaty

of Vienna, and its domestic policy upon opposition to all progress, Conservatism, as taught and reduced to its original principles by Mr. Disraeli, clearly and faithfully represented the political creed of the national party. The stability of the throne with a constitutional extension of the prerogative, the maintenance of the union between church and state, the preservation of all that conduced to the strength and the welfare of the established church, the ready advocacy of all measures calculated to promote the good of the people and to harmonize with the national progress consequent upon the increase in the national wealth and the greater educational advantages enjoyed by the country—these were the chief articles in the faith of the party which was called Conservative, but which was really national. It had no sympathy with the exclusiveness of an oligarchy; neither had it sympathy with the destructiveness of a democracy. It steered a middle course between a selfish privilege on one side, and a debasing equality on the other—ever open to redress legitimate grievances, whilst anxious to uphold all that was sound, even though ancient, in the fabric of the constitution. At a dinner of the National Conservative Registration Association, held at Willis' Rooms (June 26, 1863), Mr. Disraeli spoke at some length upon the past and future of the party. He stated, as he had often before stated, the nature of the differences in the political creed held by the Liberals and the Conservatives. He compared the fortunes of the party some few years ago with its present powerful and united condition. He showed why it had twice been forced to resign office; and he predicted a brilliant and useful future for Conservatism. The remarks he uttered on this occasion, though they have never before been taken out of the limbo of forgotten speeches, are deserving of attention.

"I am reminded," he said, after having stated that a careful and vigilant registration was an extension of the suffrage of which

all must approve, "I am reminded by the taunts of our opponents that although we are sedulous in recommending the registration of voters, we are in fact only registering electors who, when the crisis arrives, will have no opinions to represent. I am told every day that distinctive opinions and different principles between parties have ceased to exist, and the Liberal party especially are very free in assuring us that there is no longer any contrariety between political sections. Now, I will be more just and more generous to our opponents than they are inclined to be to us. I give them credit for very distinctive principles and for very distinct opinions; and the only remarkable feature in their position at present is, that they do not practise the principles which they profess. The Liberal party are of opinion that the electoral franchise ought to be democratic; we are not. The Liberal party are of opinion that the mode of exercising the suffrage should be so conducted, that property should be deprived of its legitimate influence; we are not. The Liberal party are of opinion that the union between church and state ought to be abolished; we are not. Our colonial empire, which is the national estate that assures to every subject of Her Majesty, as it were, a freehold, and which gives to the energies and abilities of Englishmen an inexhaustible theatre—the Liberal party are of opinion that the relations between the mother country and the people of the colonies should be abrogated; we are not. The Liberal party are opposed to the ancient rights of corporations and to the privileges of endowments, and think they ought to be terminated; we do not. I might pursue the catalogue through all the most considerable features of our social and political system, and point out to you the diametrical differences that exist really and in theory between the two great parties in the state. I admit that these differences at this moment from particular circumstances are not obtruded upon the attention of the legislature, or are only partially attempted to be brought

forward for public sanction. But we should deceive ourselves if we supposed that, because these great questions are suspended, they are therefore concluded. There are particular reasons why at present they can be only partially brought forward; but like the whirlwind of the poet, they 'lie hushed in grim repose,' and the day will come, and perhaps is not far distant, when you will have to encounter their claims and examine their merits.

"What I want is, that when that inevitable hour arrives, the Tory party shall be found prepared—prepared in the discipline of their numbers, but prepared in something to my mind more important than discipline and numbers—in defined opinions and distinctive principles. It has always appeared to me that the great political struggle which has prevailed during the last thirty years is, in fact, a struggle between popular principles and Liberal opinions. The institutions of the country—our ancient and limited, but still real monarchy, our national church, our estates of the realm, our colonial empire, our hereditary tenure of land, our ancient corporations and endowments, the vast and complicated fabric of our local jurisdiction and administration—all involve, represent, and secure popular principles and popular rights. It is by their united aid and agency that we enjoy that security for our persons and our properties, which to the same degree and in the same manner is enjoyed by no other country and by no other state. It is by their united aid and agency that the public liberties are preserved, that an education, secular and spiritual, is provided for the great body of the people, and that the rights of labour and the claims of industry are recognized in the scheme of the constitution. It is, in short, by their united aid and agency that the government of this country is carried on; by the benign assistance of traditionary influence, and not by the rude authority of a systematical police. It is by their agency that the national character has been formed. A professor of

Liberal opinions, on the other hand, is an individual who is of opinion that he ought to be liberated from the control of these institutions. If he has a republican bias, he is for reducing the sovereign to the position of a chief magistrate. If he be a dissenter, quite forgetful of the indirect advantage of an establishment and a national church even to himself; quite forgetful even of the direct advantage of a national church to the millions of his fellow-subjects—he is desirous of reducing that church to the position of a rival sect. If the House of Commons is an obstacle to the success of his political schemes, he is for reforming the House of Commons. If he is successful in the House of Commons, and the House of Lords is the obstacle, he will abrogate the House of Lords. To him the colonial empire is only an annual burden. To him corporation is only an equivalent term for monopoly, and endowment for privilege. The tenure of land, which in hours of perplexity, external or domestic, offers something around which men may rally and save the state, is to him only the remains of the feudal system; and as for the great system of our self-government, no one so much as the professor of liberal opinions is happier in showing you the imperfections necessarily inseparable from the political scheme, or who proves with such irresistible logic that the whole thing can be done much better and much cheaper by a system of centralized administration founded on the principle of competitive examination.

“Gentlemen, the Tory party is only in its proper position when it represents popular principles. Then it is truly irresistible. Then it can uphold the throne and the altar, the majesty of the empire, the liberty of the nation, and the rights of the multitude. There is nothing mean, petty, or exclusive, about the real character of Toryism. It necessarily depends upon enlarged sympathies and noble aspirations, because it is essentially national. The moment that Toryism deviates from that

great fundamental principle it is in danger. From that moment Liberalism flourishes, for Liberalism is the consequence of our errors, and often their corrective. We have every reason to congratulate the Tory party upon their present position. Let me recall to your memory the state of the Tory party only some few years ago. Why, only twelve years ago there was no record in the history of England of a political connection so utterly forlorn, so hopeless, so prostrate, as was then the Tory party. That eminent man, whose great sagacity and great heart had rallied us round him at a moment of unforeseen and unprecedented difficulties, had just met an untimely end. I will never mention his name, or recall his memory, without expressing the sentiments of admiration and affection which I feel. At that moment we did not literally count in the House of Commons, by any means, one-fourth of its members. As for our political opinions—that identity of sentiment which is the only foundation of vigorous action in public life—that *idem velle et idem sentire de republicâ*, which is the soul of political existence—we were in this position; we were the representatives of opinions which—that is the cruelest cut of all—had been selected by the distinguished men who were then our leaders as the soundest and most expedient foundation for political action, which we consequently had adopted and pledged ourselves to our countrymen to advocate, and which our countrymen had ratified only recently by a large majority. These opinions had been given up with such precipitation and such panic, that it was impossible to rally the country around a more temperate application of them. These very principles subsequent events proved to be practicable, and when adopted by France, they have led in that country to a great increase of wealth. And yet these principles were suddenly described by our leaders as absurd and impracticable, and which, under the circumstances in which we then found ourselves, it was impossible effectually to rally

the country round. I am not using the language of exaggeration, but of literal and historical truth, when I say there was no man who believed at that time the Tory party would ever rally. The question was, which political section would obtain the greatest portion of our plunder. We were like a wreck stranded on the beach, and it was a question who should rifle our stores. But contrast that position with our position now! In either house of parliament you confront the ministry with at least an equal power. You are the advocates of a generous and a national creed; and as for public men, why there is not a subject which can be brought forward in the House of Commons, but I am sure from every part of the benches on the side on which I sit men will come forward, who, by the amplitude of their knowledge, their argumentative power, and their general ability, will so demean themselves as to command, as they deserve, the attention of the assembly which they adorn."

Mr. Disraeli then referred to the conduct of the Tory party when in office. Both times, when called to power, they had to face an absolute majority in the House of Commons. Yet they did not flinch; they knew the risks they ran, they were aware of the personal mortification they might encounter, but they did their duty. "And what was the cause of our fall?" asked Mr. Disraeli. "On both occasions there happened that which in the history of this country, rich and long as are its political annals, never before was equalled, for which there is no parallel, and which the future perhaps would have no instance to compare with. We fell before the most peculiar coalition that ever existed, or probably ever can exist, even in England. The Liberal party defeated us in 1852, because they coalesced with the pupils of Sir Robert Peel; and the Liberal party defeated us in 1859, because they coalesced with the pupils of Mr. Bright. But, gentlemen, don't you see the moral of this? The powers of coalition are exhausted. In the purgatory in which the Liberal party

found themselves they first applied to celestial archangels, and then they descended to the lowest abyss of Hades. But a lower abyss there is not. Their means are exhausted. Coalition has nothing to fall back upon. Then I tell you, and I tell the country this, for it is an important truth, that in a country like England a coalition produces the same effect, as in continental lands is produced by a *coup d'état*. It suspends political life, and from such a state of affairs there is an inevitable reaction which no nation can escape. That reaction will come in countries where *coups d'état* have succeeded, as it will come in countries which are still ruled by the remnants of exhausted coalitions. But when that inevitable reaction comes, it is the duty of the Tory party to be prepared."

The speaker thus concluded, and in his closing remarks we see the patience and the courage of the man who was never disheartened by defeat, or by long exclusion from office:—"If during a long period you have endured mortification and disappointment, if you have been betrayed by those in whom you have trusted, if for a moment the principles which bind you together seem to be loosed, I trust that the moral experience of those years has brought you back to a due sense of the true value and eternal character of the principles by which a great national party in England can alone be maintained. I am so persuaded of the truth of this, that I can say that I have never looked upon the past with those feelings of disappointment which many of my companions entertained. I felt that the circumstances under which our political connection was first formed were most rare and remarkable, and I knew that a hard trial must be undergone before we were approved for the trust to which we aspired. When there have been murmurs at delay, I myself only saw preparation; even where there has been discomfiture, I have only recognized progress. I know of no time when the principles of the Tory party were more clear in the appreciation of that party and of the country."

Parliament was prorogued by commission July 28, 1863. The message from the crown was chiefly occupied in dealing with foreign politics. "Her Majesty," it said, "has seen with deep regret the present condition of Poland. Her Majesty has been engaged, in concert with the Emperor of the French and the Emperor of Austria, in negotiations, the object of which has been to obtain the fulfilment of the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 in behalf of the Poles. Her Majesty trusts that those stipulations will be carried into execution, and that thus a conflict distressing to humanity and dangerous to the tranquillity of Europe may be brought to a close. The civil war between the Northern and Southern states of the North American Union still, unfortunately, continues, and is necessarily attended with much evil, not only to the contending parties, but also to nations which have taken no part in the contest. Her Majesty, however, has seen no reason to depart from that strict neutrality which Her Majesty has observed from the beginning of the contest. The Greek nation having chosen Prince William of Denmark for their king, Her Majesty is taking steps with a view to the union of the Ionian Islands to the kingdom of Greece. For this purpose Her Majesty is in communication with the powers who were parties to the treaty of 1815, by which those islands were placed under the protection of the British crown; and the wishes of the Ionians on the subject of such union will be duly ascertained. Several barbarous outrages committed in Japan upon British subjects have rendered it necessary for Her Majesty to demand reparation, and Her Majesty hopes that her demands will be conceded by the Japanese government, without its being necessary to resort to coercive measures to enforce them. The Emperor of Brazil has thought fit to break off his diplomatic relations with Her Majesty, in consequence of Her Majesty not having complied with demands which she did not deem it possible to accede to.

Her Majesty has no wish that this estrangement should continue, and would be glad to see her relations with Brazil re-established."* The message concluded by stating that the general prosperity of the empire continued unimpaired. The session had been dull and uneventful, and few measures of any importance received the royal assent. The contested questions of reform and ballot had for the moment been set on one side, and both parties had now resolved, so far as legislation was concerned, to "rest and be thankful."

During the autumn various matters occurred which had their influence upon the political history of this country. The Ionian parliament had been dissolved by Sir Henry Storks, and the islands had resolved unanimously in favour of union with Greece. Prince Satsuma, after his city of Kagosima had been bombarded by an English fleet, consented to pay his portion of the indemnity demanded for an attack made upon certain English travellers within the bounds of his jurisdiction, and to do his utmost to apprehend the murderers. Earl Russell, whilst on a visit to Scotland, and at a public dinner given in his honour, expressed his opinion that, so far as reform was concerned, we were at the present entitled "to rest and be thankful"—memorable words which were afterwards frequently brought up against him. The French expedition to Mexico had resulted in the Archduke Maximilian publicly declaring that he would agree to accept the crown of Mexico, provided his election was ratified by a free vote of the whole Mexican people. In order to settle the various international difficulties that had of late years arisen, the Emperor of the French issued an invitation to the Euro-

* Early in the May of 1863 certain Brazilian merchant vessels had been captured by our men-of-war in reprisal of insults offered to three officers of H.M.S. *Forte*, and of the pillage of the British trading vessel, the *Prince of Wales*, which had been shipwrecked on the coast of Brazil. The Brazilian minister in London had paid to the English government £8200 as an indemnity. On the English government refusing to express regret to Brazil for reprisals, diplomatic intercourse between the two countries was suspended. Amicable relations were restored August, 1865.

pean sovereigns to assemble in congress at Paris. "Called to the throne," he wrote to Her Majesty, "by Providence and the will of the French people, but trained in the school of adversity, it is perhaps less allowable for me than for others to ignore the rights of sovereigns and the legitimate aspirations of the people. Thus I am ready, without any preconceived system, to bring to an international council a spirit of moderation and justice, the ordinary portion of those who have undergone so many different trials. If I take the initiative in such an overture, I do not yield to an impulse of vanity, but because I am the sovereign to whom ambitious projects have mostly been attributed. I have it at heart to prove, by this frank and loyal overture, that my sole object is to arrive, without convulsion, at the pacification of Europe. If this proposal be agreed to, I beg your Majesty to accept Paris as the place of meeting. If the princes, allies and friends of France, should think fit to enhance by their presence the authority of the deliberations, I shall be proud to offer them cordial hospitality. Europe will, perhaps, see some advantage in the capital whence the signal of confusion has so often arisen becoming the seat of conferences destined to lay the basis of a general pacification. I take this opportunity of renewing to you the assurances of the high esteem and inviolable friendship with which I am, Madam my Sister, your Majesty's good brother—NAPOLEON."

This invitation was declined. "Not being able," wrote Earl Russell in reply, "to discern the likelihood of those beneficial consequences which the Emperor of the French promised himself when proposing a congress, Her Majesty's government, following their own strong convictions, after mature deliberation feel themselves unable to accept His Imperial Majesty's invitation."

The one subject in which public interest now centred was, however, the Schleswig-Holstein question, which had once more arisen. To understand this *bête noire* of

diplomacy, we must briefly refer to the past. The Danish monarchy originally consisted of four principal divisions—the kingdom of Denmark proper, the duchy of Schleswig, the duchy of Holstein, and the duchy of Lauenburg. Denmark proper and Schleswig formed together the original Danish realm, whilst Holstein and Lauenburg were German territories acquired since, and known as the "German duchies" of the King of Denmark. The duchy of Schleswig was originally a part of the Danish province of Jutland, which afterwards became a fief of the Danish crown. In 1459 it escheated to the crown, but was maintained as a separate fief, and was soon afterwards divided between the three principal branches of the house of Oldenburg, the Royal Danish, the Gottorp, and the Sönderborg branches. For a short period the share of the Duke of Gottorp was almost separated from Denmark; but in 1721 the whole duchy was again made by letters patent an integral part of the Danish state. The duchy of Holstein was a fief of the German empire until 1806, when it was united to the body politic of the Danish monarchy by letters patent. The duchy of Lauenburg was acquired in 1815, and for ever incorporated into the Danish monarchy by letters patent. Such briefly is the history of the duchies.

In 1848 an insurrectionary German party, known as the Schleswig Holstein party, appealed to Germany for aid in establishing the union of the two duchies of Holstein and Schleswig, with a separate constitutional existence from the rest of the monarchy. Germany assisted the insurrection, and after a struggle of nearly three years, the peace of Berlin was signed July 2, 1850, by which Germany withdrew from the war, and agreed to pacify Holstein. After considerable delay, on the application of Denmark, a German army of "execution" marched into Holstein and occupied the duchy. When the pacification of Holstein was effected, Germany refused to withdraw her troops, and to rein-

state the King of Denmark in his full sovereign authority in Holstein and Lauenburg, until the Danish government had given certain assurances as to the system of government intended to be followed in those duchies, and also in the Danish duchy of Schleswig. This led to much diplomatic correspondence in 1851-52, which resulted in Denmark pledging herself to the following:—1. That Schleswig should not be incorporated with Denmark proper. 2. That Denmark should establish an organic constitutional connection of all parts of the country, so as to form a united monarchy, in which no part was subordinate to the other. 3. That Denmark should extend equal protection to both the German and Danish nationalities in Schleswig. This third clause, however, Denmark afterwards denied having made.

On January 28, 1852, the King of Denmark promulgated a proclamation, in which he announced to his subjects the basis on which he intended to reconstitute the Danish monarchy. This proclamation was approved of by the Germanic Diet, and the King of Denmark was reinstated in Holstein and Lauenburg, with full sovereign authority. The steps taken by Denmark to carry out this proclamation were:—1. The revival of the provincial assemblies called Estates, which Holstein and Schleswig had possessed previous to 1848, with a jurisdiction limited only to local affairs. 2. The reduction of the parliament of Denmark proper, from being a parliament for the whole non-German portion of the monarchy, to that of a provincial assembly, confined to the local affairs of that province. 3. A constitution for the whole monarchy was enacted; this constitution established under the name of "Rigsraad," or Council of the Realm, a general legislative assembly for the whole monarchy, based upon the equal representation of all parts of the monarchy, according to the ratio of population and taxation. The Germanic Diet now interfered, and required the abrogation of this constitution, but limited

its demand to the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, over which districts the Diet was alone entitled to exercise any control. After various futile negotiations, the Danish government, by an ordinance dated November 6, 1858, acceded to the demands of the Diet: thus Holstein and Lauenburg were put out of all constitutional union with the other parts of the Danish monarchy, being placed under the absolute authority of the sovereign, and the jurisdiction of their assemblies strictly limited to local affairs.

The Holstein assembly now revived the pretensions of 1848-50 regarding a constitutional union with Schleswig, and refused all overtures for a general constitution. While this question was being discussed, the Germanic Diet required of Denmark that the assembly of the duchy of Holstein should exercise the same powers as the Rigsraad, in controlling the government of the whole monarchy. This demand, owing to the mediation of Great Britain, was compromised, by limiting the contributions of Holstein towards the general expenditure of the monarchy to the sums fixed by the normal budget of 1856. In March, 1863, the Danish government decreed an ordinance that no law should be valid in Holstein which had not obtained the sanction of that duchy, and that in case of disagreement between the assembly of Holstein and the Rigsraad, a separate legislature for Holstein, on the part of the Holstein assembly, should take place. To this Germany objected, regarding the latter decree as a means for paving the way for a complete separation of Holstein, in point of legislation and of administration, from the rest of the monarchy. Germany regarded it as a violation of federal rights, and of the treaties of 1852. On November 18, 1863, the Danish government made certain alterations in the constitution of 1855, with respect to Denmark proper and Schleswig, which tended to increase all the more the interference of Austria and Prussia.

At this juncture the death of the King

of Denmark caused the Schleswig-Holstein question to assume a new and most complicated aspect. Frederick VII. of Denmark had no heirs, and by the treaty of London (May 8, 1852) between England, Russia, Sweden, France, and Prussia, on the one hand, and Denmark on the other, it had been settled that, in default of male issue in the direct line of Frederick III. of Denmark, the Danish crown should descend to the issue of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and his consort Louisa, Princess of Hesse, in order of primogeniture from male to male; and also provided for the continued union of all the states then united under the sceptre of the King of Denmark. Accordingly on the death of Frederick VII., and in conformity with the provisions of the treaty of London, Prince Christian (the father of the Princess of Wales) ascended the Danish throne as King Christian IX. His claim to a portion of his territories was at once contested by the Duke of Augustenburg, who insisted on his right to be recognized Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. Unfortunately for the legality of the duke's claim, the late Duke of Augustenburg had promised (December 30, 1852) for himself and family not to disturb the tranquillity, nor to oppose "the arrangement of the succession to all the lands now united under His Majesty's sceptre," and had accepted from the Danish government a sum of 3,500,000 dollars in compensation for the surrender of his claims. The son, however, now declined to be bound by this renunciation, and it suited the policy of Germany to support his claim. By the treaty of London the succession had been secured to Christian IX., whose queen would have been entitled, after the death of Frederick VII., to reign over Denmark proper and Schleswig, only her majesty had yielded her rights to her husband. With regard to Holstein, the legal heir to that duchy, after the sovereigns of Denmark, was the late Emperor of Russia.

In 1851, however, the Czar had ceded his rights of inheritance to the present dynasty.* The dispute now came before the Frankfort Diet, and it was discussed whether there should be administration of the government in the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, without reference to the contested right of succession; or whether the Diet should enter into hostile occupation of the duchies, and hold them until it had decided to whom they rightfully belonged. Austria and Prussia voted for the first measure, and the committee of the Diet in favour of the last. In the end the Austro-Prussian demand was carried by a small majority voting for what was called occupation, which was to give the Diet the right of determining the succession. Accordingly the Danish government was summoned to withdraw its troops from the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg. Denmark, under the impression that England would not desert her, declined to obey, and war seemed imminent. Holstein refused to pay homage to King Christian, and publicly proclaimed the Duke of Augustenburg as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein by the title of Frederick VIII. Prussia and Austria were busy arming, determined to uphold the Augustenburg claim. Before the year closed it became known that the ultimatum addressed to Denmark had been rejected, and that the allied Prussian and Austrian army were marching north to enter Holstein.

* The following table may assist our view:—



CHAPTER XX.

THE DANO-GERMAN QUESTION.

ON the assembling of parliament (Feb. 4th, 1864) the important question of the hour was the dispute between Denmark and Germany. Domestic politics at this time offered little opportunity for discussion. Lord Palmerston was in power; the country was content with his rule; he was an old man and both parties in the state had, as it were, tacitly agreed to defer all burning questions of legislation until the end of his political life, which could not be far distant, had arrived, and a younger and more vigorous chief stood at the head of affairs. The nation was to enter upon a period of repose; and for a time "rest and be thankful" was to be the policy of the legislature. Save the various complications on the continent, there was nothing at home to keenly interest English politicians. Trade was brisk, the revenue, in spite of all past alarms, was flourishing, the distress in Lancashire was decreasing, the country was at peace with all its foreign neighbours; and as to the few additions that were to be made to the statute-book, they excited little attention and were but coldly received. The only one domestic event about which there was any enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm it kindled was great, was that an heir had been born to the throne. "Her Majesty is confident," said the royal speech, "that you will share her feeling of gratitude to Almighty God on account of the Princess of Wales having given birth to a son—an event which has called forth from her faithful people renewed demonstrations of devoted loyalty and attachment to her person and family." Lord Derby, in his criticism of the speech from the throne gracefully alluded to this joyous fact. "It appears to me," he said, "that as

we advance in life we look with a warmer and kindlier sympathy upon the opening prospects of those who are entering upon that career, towards the close of which so many of us are hurrying. But I am sure there is not one of your lordships who does not view with the deepest interest the happy career of that youthful pair, upon the birth of whose heir we are now congratulating the sovereign. I am sure there is not one of your lordships who does not offer up a fervent prayer to the Throne of Grace that that bright prospect may remain unclouded, and that long after the youngest of your lordships have passed away from this scene, the throne of these realms may be occupied by the descendants of the illustrious prince and his new-born heir. *'Et nati natorum. et qui nascentur ab illis.'*"

It was, however, in the development of foreign politics that the chief interest of the nation was centred. "The state of affairs on the continent of Europe," said the royal speech, "has been the cause of great anxiety to Her Majesty. The death of the late King of Denmark brought into immediate application the stipulations of the treaty of May, 1852, concluded by Her Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Sweden, and the King of Denmark, and afterwards acceded to by the King of Hanover, the King of Saxony, the King of Wurtemberg, the King of the Belgians, the King of the Netherlands, the Queen of Spain, the King of Portugal, and the King of Sardinia. That treaty declared that it is conducive to the preservation of the balance of power and of the peace of Europe that the integrity of the Danish monarchy should be maintained, and that the several

territories which have hitherto been under the sway of the King of Denmark, should continue so to remain; and for this purpose it was agreed that in the event of the death of the late king and of his uncle Prince Frederick without issue, his present Majesty King Christian IX. should be acknowledged as successor to all the dominions then united under the sceptre of His Majesty the King of Denmark. Her Majesty, actuated by the same desire to preserve the peace of Europe, which was one of the declared objects of all the powers who were parties to that treaty, has been unremitting in her endeavours to bring about a peaceful settlement of the differences which on this matter have arisen between Germany and Denmark, to ward off the dangers which might follow from a beginning of warfare in the north of Europe, and Her Majesty will continue her efforts in the interest of peace."

On the matter coming before parliament, the conduct of the foreign secretary in dealing with these questions during the past autumn was severely criticised by the Conservative party in both houses. The Palmerston cabinet, true to their foreign policy of verbal interference and practical inactivity, had behaved to Denmark as they had formerly behaved to Italy. The Danes had been freely treated to advice, had been encouraged to resist, had been informed that right was on their side, had perused despatches abusing the action of Prussia and Austria, had been assured, if words signified anything, of the support of England; and then, when attacked by the foe, had been left single-handed to fight out a terribly unequal conflict. The phrase, "meddle and muddle," will long be remembered; it originated on this occasion. "The foreign policy of the noble earl" (Russell), said Lord Derby, "as far as the principle of non-intervention is concerned, may be summed up in two truly expressive words—"meddle" and "muddle." During the whole course of his diplomatic correspondence, wherever he has interfered—and he has interfered everywhere—he has

been lecturing, scolding, blustering, and—retreating. Seriously, for though there may be something ludicrous about it, the matter is of too great importance to be treated only in a light and jocular manner, I cannot but feel as an Englishman that I am lowered and humiliated in my own estimation and in that of other nations, by the result of the noble earl's administration of foreign affairs. Thanks to the noble earl and the present government, we have at this moment not one single friend in Europe: and more than that, this country, the chief fault of which was that it went too direct and straightforward at what it aimed; which never gave a promise without the intention of performing; which never threatened without a full determination of striking; which never made a demand without being prepared to enforce it—this country is now in such a position, that its menaces are disregarded, its magniloquent language is ridiculed, and its remonstrances are treated with contemptuous indifference, by the small as well as by the great powers of the continent."

In the lower House the censure passed by the leader of the Opposition was equally scathing. Mr. Disraeli carefully criticised the speech of the lords commissioners; but before dealing with what it contained, he touched upon what it omitted. He regretted that no allusion had been made to the distress existing in Ireland, and to the patient and exemplary manner in which such distress had been borne. It was also strange that no mention had been made of the United States. The relations between England and the United States were at that moment very intimate and had been very active; and some expression of opinion on the part of the government as to the probable duration of the civil war would have been welcomed by the country. It would also have been satisfactory to know that the principle of strict neutrality was still the principle of the policy of the government, so far as the United States were concerned; and that during the recess it had been rigorously observed and strictly acted upon.

He would also liked to have heard mention made of China and Poland. Taking a general view of their external relations at the present time, what struck him most was their utter confusion. Everthing was in an inconsistent condition—sometimes approaching even to the incoherent. Everything appeared to be done with a total want of system, and without a definite object in view. Witness the conduct of the government towards Russia when the Polish insurrection broke out, and the conditions which had been pressed upon the young King of Greece in return for the cession of the Ionian Islands. Nor could he congratulate the government upon their tact in replying to the request of the Emperor of the French for a congress to assemble at Paris. "A good understanding," said Mr. Disraeli, "between England and France is simply this—that so far as the influence of these two great powers extends, the affairs of the world shall be conducted by their co-operation instead of by their rivalry. But co-operation requires not merely identity of interest, but reciprocal good feeling. In public as well as in private affairs, a certain degree of sentiment is necessary for the happy conduct of matters. A kind thing, for instance, ought not to be done in a rough manner, and if possible a rough thing ought to be done in a kind manner. The feelings of nations must be considered. Now the position of the Emperor of the French, at the end of last year, everybody knows was a distrustful one. The Emperor of the French had held out expectations which he could not fulfil, and he had been worsted in the diplomatic encounter. If ever a sovereign was in a situation in which he might count on the sympathy of an ally, it was the Emperor of the French; but especially an ally who had very much encouraged him in the erroneous course he had taken. I look upon the proposition for a congress to have been an adroit manœuvre. Amid a burst of martial music and the roll of artillery the Emperor of the French would

have retreated with flying colours. The proposition itself was deficient in soundness . . . Far from disapproving of Her Majesty's government declining to attend the proposed congress, giving them credit for the validity of the reasons which induced them to take that course, I cannot extend the like approbation to the manner and to the mode in which their refusal was conveyed. The position of the Emperor of the French is peculiar. He has publicly, almost ostentatiously, proclaimed it to Europe, and therefore there can be no indelicacy in referring to it. He is not, as he has told you, like other emperors—like the Emperor of Austria or of Russia. He does not stand upon tradition. He is not hedged in by the magic of prescriptive right. He has been created and can only be maintained by the sympathies of his people—a proud, imperious, and apt to be discontented people. Humiliate the idol, and the worshippers become disquieted and indignant. A considerate ally ought to have remembered this. But an ally who had encouraged the very policy which had involved the Emperor of the French in his difficulties—an ally who had been the partaker of his projects and a full sharer of his diplomatic discomfiture—such an ally ought not to have received his proposition of a congress in a spirit of cynical criticism. Sarcasm is no doubt a great ornament of debate, and is recognized as an efficient weapon of rhetoric. But the natural language of diplomacy is conciliation, and it is to be regretted that secretaries of state, when they convey to foreign powers the decisions of sovereigns and cabinets, should find no happier medium of expression than a sneer." *

* "I totally deny that there was anything discourteous said or meant in the answer. The habits of this country are perhaps more plain and simple in giving expression to their opinions than those of continental nations. We state our opinions and we give our reasons; but we do not often abound in those superfluous expressions of compliment which we are accustomed to hear from our neighbours. But there is nothing in that answer which can with any semblance of justice be called uncourteous, uncivil, unfriendly, or otherwise than was due between two governments which are upon a footing of reciprocal confidence." — Lord Palmerston, *House of Commons, Feb. 4th, 1864.*

Mr. Disraeli then came to the subject which absorbed almost the only important part of the speech—the Schleswig-Holstein dispute. And here again, he said, were exhibited a confusion, an inconsistency of conduct, a contrariety of courses with regard to the great powers, and a total lack of diplomatic system. He referred to the despatch of Earl Russell, September 24, 1862, when Denmark was recommended to give to Holstein and Lauenberg all that the German confederation had asked for them, and to accord to Schleswig self-government—advice which led the extreme German party to conclude that they possessed the support of England. Then in striking contrast to the tenor of that despatch, he alluded to the burning words of Lord Palmerston at the close of the last session, when Mr. Horsman had brought the subject of Schleswig-Holstein before the House. “Now what was the speech of the Prime Minister?” asked Mr. Disraeli. “I give no opinion whatever as to the justness or expediency of the course he recommended, any more than I do of the despatch of the secretary of state for foreign affairs. I would, however, appeal to any one who listened on that occasion to the speech of the prime minister, in which he declared, while duly acknowledging the relations of Holstein to the German Diet, that if the border was passed Denmark would find that she was not alone in the quarrel—I ask the House, I ask both sides of the House with equal confidence—whether the necessary effect of that speech was not, what we all know now it was, to encourage a party that never required any encouragement, namely, the extreme Danish party. Therefore you see in this grave question of Germany and Denmark the same confusion, the same inconsistency, the same incoherency, and the same oppositeness, which I have traced throughout in the diplomatic conduct of Her Majesty’s government.

“This despatch and this speech,” he continued, “having worked, one to encourage Germany to take an extravagant

view, and the other to support Denmark in a view equally irrational, we now find the question discussed in the speech of the lords commissioners. I do not doubt that these three paragraphs are perfectly familiar to every hon. gentleman. The third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs of the speech from the throne, the three most important paragraphs in this speech, are in fact a statement of premisses. They are premisses drawn up with great art, and no doubt for very great objects. They were drawn up to impress on the country and upon Europe the solemn and important engagements that have been entered into by all the principal crowned heads of Europe. It reads, in fact, like the *Almanach de Gotha*. First of all there is the treaty; then the style and names of the sovereigns; then the policy is brought forward, which was the preservation of the balance of power and of the peace of Europe, by the maintenance of the integrity of the Danish monarchy; and that in order to do this his present Majesty King Christian should be acknowledged as successor to all the dominions of the late king of Denmark. Now, having brought forward all these premisses, what is the conclusion that has been drawn from them? It cannot be found in the speech, because the third paragraph ends only, ‘And Her Majesty will continue her efforts in the interest of peace.’ The logical conclusion of these three paragraphs is to be found in the speech which the noble lord at the head of the government made in this House on the last day of last session—that in consequence of this treaty, in consequence of the admission into this treaty of all the sovereigns of Europe, in consequence of the vital interests involved in that treaty, Denmark, if an act of violence was committed against her (for that was the language of the noble viscount)—Denmark was not to find herself alone in the contest. But here we have these pompous premisses; and what is the conclusion in the speech? Why, ‘that Her Majesty will continue her

efforts in the interest of peace.' The interest of peace! Why, would any stranger who had listened to the speech of the lords commissioners to-day, and had no other knowledge on the subject, believe that when they thus referred to Germany, the Eider had actually been passed, that blood had been shed, that perhaps at this moment a great engagement was taking place?"*

The truth was, declared Mr. Disraeli, that all this confusion and inconsistency were due to the government not knowing what to do in the matter; they had no policy, but they trusted that by consulting parliament a policy would be framed for them by the House of Commons. "I for one," cried the leader of the Opposition, "will not help the government out of the difficulties in which they find themselves, by coming forward with a cut and dried policy to settle all the differences of Europe. The condition of Europe is, no doubt, one of a grave character; and upon the conduct of the English government and upon the conduct of parliament much depends. But it is for the government to frame a policy and recommend it to us; and I have no doubt that when it is brought before us, if it be a wise policy, the House will unanimously support them; for I have always seen that when foreign affairs have occupied the attention of the House there has been an absence of party strife. But let us be sure about the policy we are pursuing. Let us be quite sure if we go to war, first of all, that it is a necessary and just war; and secondly, if now necessary, whether it might not have been prevented by more skilful management. Her Majesty's government, through this particular business of Germany and Denmark, much resembles a certain Danish prince. He was not a prince of Augustenburg nor a prince of Glucksburg, but one whose name will probably survive

them both. That important Dane was 'infirm of purpose:'—

'The times are out of joint : O cursed spite !
That ever I was born to set it right.'

But you are ministers to set them right, and I do protest against you coming to parliament in a critical state of affairs without a policy. If you have a policy, let it be brought forward fairly and candidly; do not come masked and vizored here without our knowing whether, in your opinion, the claims of Denmark are just, or the claims of Germany can be defended. . . . If the policy of the government is clear and well considered, then they will be supported. But if they have no policy; if they are at this critical moment without allies, looking for the vague sympathies of parliament to guide and support them—then I say they are taking an unworthy course, that they are unfit for the offices which they fill and the places they occupy; and if it is proved that this is the state of affairs, I do not believe that parliament will hesitate to express its opinion on their conduct."

Meanwhile unhappy Denmark, allured to resistance and then deserted in the hour of her unequal struggle, had to face her foes with such resources as she possessed. Her courage was high, her cause just, her troops well officered and animated by the fiercest patriotism; yet against such unfair odds there could be but one end. The Danes were everywhere defeated, Eckenforde was taken, Missunde was bombarded and burnt, the Dannewerke which protected Schleswig was abandoned, Schleswig was occupied by the foe; then came the engagements at Wielhoi, Sandberg, and Rackebull, and at Sonderbygaard and Veill, the bombardment of Sonderborg and the retreat from Fredericia; before the end of April the whole of Jutland was in the hands of the allied Prussians and Austrians.

Whilst public interest was being warmly enlisted in favour of the weaker side, and subscriptions were freely raised in aid of the

* This speech was delivered February 4; three days before the Prussians had entered Schleswig and taken Eckenforde.

wounded Danes, an event occurred which turned attention from Copenhagen to Paris, and finally led to the retirement of one of the subordinates in the ministry. At the trial in Paris of Greco and others for conspiring to assassinate the Emperor of the French,* it was stated by the Procureur-Impérial in his speech that a paper had been found in the possession of one of the accused persons, directing him to write for money to a Mr. Flowers, at 35 Thurloe Square, Brompton, where a member of the English parliament resided, who in 1855 had been appointed banker to the Tibaldi conspirators. Mr. Cox, the member for Finsbury, first referred to the matter incidentally, when Mr. Stansfeld, who held office as one of the lords of the Admiralty, indignantly repudiated the statement made by the Procureur-Impérial. It was quite true, he said, that he lived at No. 35 Thurloe Square, Brompton, but he knew nothing whatever of the prisoner Greco, or of Mr. Flowers, whose letters were addressed to his house. He had, however, been on intimate terms with M. Mazzini for the past eighteen years, and he held the character of the Italian in high esteem.

The boasted intimacy of one holding office under the crown with a man who openly advocated assassination when necessary for state purposes, was not likely to pass without comment. Sir Henry Stracey accordingly moved "That the speech of the Procureur-Impérial on the trial of Greco, implicating a member of this House and of Her Majesty's government in the plot for the assassination of our ally, the Emperor of the French, deserves the serious consideration of this House." In defence of his colleague Lord Palmerston stated that he considered the explanation of Mr. Stansfeld perfectly satisfactory, and that he had not thought it his duty to communicate with the French government on the matter. "I should have been fairly humiliated," he

said, "if I had been a party to a communication to the French government, to tell them that an English gentleman, a member of parliament holding office under the government, was not connected with an infamous plot against the emperor's life." Mr. Disraeli rose (March 17, 1864) to make a few remarks upon the occasion. He failed to understand why the dread of humiliation should have deterred Lord Palmerston from communicating with the French government upon the subject. The prime minister was the head of a government who, when they had felt it to be their duty, had not permitted the word "humiliation" to induce them to refrain from a course which they deemed to be expedient. "But, says the noble lord with heedless rhetoric," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "what had we to complain of? Are we to apply to a foreign government because one of my colleagues has been accused by some foreign official of that which he did not perpetrate, and which he has openly denied? Why, sir, this leads us, after all the noise of the noble lord, to recur to the real question before us. The statement of the noble lord proved that he did not understand the very point upon which, of all others, he should have directed the judgment of the House. Let us see, in the first place, what occurred. The Procureur-Général, the attorney-general of a foreign country, makes a public statement in a court of the highest consideration in France, and what is the statement? He says that a member of the British parliament, and what perhaps he was not aware of at the time, a member of the administration, had been, he was sorry to say, the medium by which Mazzini communicated with the conspirators against the life of his sovereign. Did the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stansfeld) deny the statement? Why, he admitted it and he explained it. He told us the letters came to his house; he, sitting by the side of the noble lord who has misstated his whole case, does not deny that letters did come, and that his house in

* Four Italians, named Greco, Imperatori, Trabucco, and Scaglioni, were arrested at Paris, December 29, 1863, on a charge of conspiring against the life of the emperor.

Thurloe Square was the medium for communication between Mazzini and his correspondents. Does he deny that?"

Mr Stansfeld—"What correspondents?"

"What correspondents!" indignantly cried Mr. Disraeli. "You know them better than I do, I suppose. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the assassins of Europe. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the advocates of anarchy throughout the continent. 'What correspondents?' asks the member for Halifax. Why, the men who point their poniards at the breast of our allies. Why, this is the most unfortunate movement on the part of the noble lord I have ever witnessed."

The prime minister, continued Mr. Disraeli, had made a great mistake. He had failed to perform the first duty which civilization, if no other reason, demanded. Sufficient had occurred to require, on the part of the government, a friendly, temperate, dignified, and, if necessary, confidential communication to the foreign government. "Take our own case," instanced Mr. Disraeli. "Supposing the attorney-general here had made a statement, after an important state trial in this country, that he regretted to find that one of the most eminent members of the Chamber of Deputies in France had made his house the machinery of communication between foreigners and conspirators against our sovereign, would you be surprised if the representative of the French emperor were to ask for some explanation of such statement; and if proof had been given of the accuracy of such statement, as has been so lavishly admitted by the noble lord, would it not have been his duty to have expressed his deep regret that such circumstances should have occurred, that such incidents should have happened? Judge by your own feelings what you would have expected the representatives of your sovereign to do." Yet the prime minister had declined to assert

the dignity of the House of Commons, and to make a communication regretting the circumstance! Mr. Disraeli concluded by expressing his intention of supporting the motion of Sir Henry Stracey. On a division, the motion was defeated by a majority of ten.

The subject, however, was not allowed to drop. On the following day Lord Elcho asked the prime minister whether Mr. Stansfeld had tendered his resignation. In reply Lord Palmerston stated that such resignation had been offered, but that he had declined to accept it. Shortly afterwards the prime minister was forced to arrive at a different conclusion. Mr. Stansfeld felt that if he continued in the administration he would lay himself open to a series of attacks which could not but be damaging to the ministry, and he therefore resolved to sever his connection with the government. Speaking from below the gangway, he said there were occasions when it became a man to consult his own sense of right as to the course he should adopt. Such an occasion had now arrived. From what he had seen or read he had become convinced that he had ceased to be any accession to the strength of the government; and as he had reason to fear he might be a source of difficulty and embarrassment to them, it was for himself and not for others to undertake the responsibility of saying that he could not consent to continue to be the cause of embarrassment to an administration which he had decided to support. He had therefore placed his resignation in the hands of the prime minister, and it had been accepted. "I trust," he concluded, "I have made an explanation which will not be deemed unsatisfactory by the House. I have only to add that if any doubts still remain in the minds of any hon. members, I am not only ready, but I invite them to give expression to those doubts, and to enable me at once completely to satisfy them and to answer any questions that they may have to put to me. Meanwhile I leave this question

and throw myself upon the House, and I may add upon my countrymen, with reference to a matter involving that which is every man's dearest inheritance, an unblemished character and a fair name."

Lord Palmerston stanchly supported his late colleague. "My hon. friend," he said, "reminded the House that on a former occasion when he tendered his resignation I declined to accept it, and asked him to continue in office. Upon the present occasion he has left me no alternative. I can only say that I am convinced that the motives which led my hon. friend to take that peremptory decision were highly honourable to him. I have no doubt that he thought, having such an explanation to make as he has now made, and which I am persuaded the House will think perfectly and entirely satisfactory, that the explanation would come from him with a better grace and with more effect while holding an independent position, than if he made it from the bench on which we now sit. With regard to those insinuations and aspersions to which he has referred, I can only say that with him I repudiate them with disdain. I am firmly convinced, and I am sure all those who know my hon. friend must be equally convinced, that any charge of implication in these odious proceedings—which charge, I think, has been basely thrown out against him—is altogether unsupported by proof, and is utterly devoid of foundation." The vacancy in the admiralty created by this retirement was filled up by Mr. Childers.

The government was soon to lose the services of another and a far more important member of its administration. The subject of education became a prominent feature of the session. The public school commissioners had presented their report, and an interesting debate took place upon the novel blue book. The commissioners stated that having carefully examined the schools at Eton, Winchester, Westminster, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylor's, Shrewsbury, Harrow, and Rugby, they complained that

the course of study pursued at those institutions was lacking in breadth, and therefore failed to furnish that development of the mind which was really required. They also were of opinion, though they could not speak too highly of the discipline and moral training maintained at our public schools, that too much indulgence was exhibited to idleness. It was with regard to the exclusive character of the education pursued at these seats of learning that Mr. Cobden made his memorable remarks to his constituents at Rochdale. "I will take," he said in the last speech he ever delivered, "any undergraduate now at Oxford or Cambridge, and I will bring him to a map of the United States and ask him to put his finger on Chicago, and I will undertake to say he will not go within 1000 miles of it. Yet Chicago is a place of 150,000 inhabitants, from which 1,000,000 or 2,000,000 of people in our country are annually fed. These young gentlemen know all about the geography of ancient Greece and Egypt. Now I know I shall be pelted with Greek and Latin quotations for what I am going to say. When I was at Athens, I walked out one summer morning to seek the famous river, the Ilyssus, and after walking some hundred yards or so up what appeared to be the bed of the mountain torrent, I came upon a number of Athenian laundresses, and I found that they had dammed up this famous classical river, and were using every drop of its water for their lavatory purposes. Why then should not these young gentlemen, who know all about the geography of the Ilyssus, know also something about the geography of the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri?"*

The education of the lower orders had also engaged the attention of the govern-

* "To the Ilyssus we may confess that Cobden was a little unjust, but the point of his good humoured sarcasm has been much misrepresented. He was, he said in his last speech, a great advocate of culture of every kind. What he sought was that young men should be led to add to classical learning a great knowledge of modern affairs, and the habits of serious political thought about their own time."—*Life of Cobden*, by John Morley.

ment. The subject was intrusted to Mr. Lowe, who then held office as vice-president of the educational department. No one was better suited for the post. The university experiences of the vice-president his practical acquaintance with matters connected with education, his profound scholarship, which he pretended to despise—though somewhat after the fashion of the man proud of his lineage, who affects to scorn all advantages of birth—and his mastery of details, all marked him out as dedicated to the department to which he was appointed. Under the vigorous administration of Mr. Lowe the work of the office had been well done, and there was no reason to suppose that his connection with the department would soon be terminated. One of the great objects of his rule, which the vice-president had set before him, was to endeavour to place the various religious communions of the country on a footing of perfect equality, so far as the distribution of the grants made under the authority of the educational department was concerned. This latitudinarianism was strongly disapproved of by the Conservative party, whilst it was also made matter of complaint that Mr. Lowe, in the exercise of his official capacity, had taken upon himself to tamper with the reports of the inspectors of schools, and to suppress such statements as had been opposed to his own views. Lord Robert Cecil brought the matter before parliament, and moved—"That in the opinion of this House the mutilation of the reports of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools, and the exclusion from them of statements and opinions adverse to the educational views entertained by the committee of council, while matters favourable to them are admitted, are violations of the understanding under which the appointment of inspectors was originally sanctioned by parliament, and tend entirely to destroy the value of their reports." The House supported the views of Lord Robert, and the resolution was carried by a majority of eight.

The result of this division was regarded by Mr. Lowe as a censure so seriously reflecting upon his character as minister of the department, as to make it incompatible with his sense of honour any longer to retain office. At the same time it was felt that the vice-president had been thrown over; for had Lord Palmerston chosen to exert himself, it was scarcely probable that his colleague would have been visited with the censure of the House. Mr. Lowe, however, from some peculiarity of temperament, had never troubled himself about cultivating those arts and graces of manner which make heads of departments popular with their subordinates and acceptable to their colleagues. Furnished with a vast supply of spontaneous aversion, which was lavishly directed upon any person or in any quarter at the slightest provocation, holding in profound and patent scorn all who differed from his political opinions, endowed with a vocabulary more often steeped in the gall of sarcasm and invective than in the honey of compromise or approval, and gifted with a manner in which dictatorial clownishness and colonial brusqueness strove for the mastery, it perhaps was not a matter of great surprise that the ordinary exertions made by a minister to save a colleague from censure and overthrow were neglected on this occasion. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Lowe was blameless in the case, for on a committee being appointed to investigate the charges brought against him, the inquiry resulted in the entire acquittal of the late vice-president, and in the motion of Lord Robert Cecil being rescinded.

Mr. Lowe complained at the time that the House had arrived at a decision suddenly, and in the absence of all evidence. He had, he said, neither marked nor mutilated the reports. All that he had ever done with the reports, when they were not framed in accordance with the official minute, was to return them to the inspectors, and leave them to discover for themselves in what respect their reports militated

against the rule laid down for their guidance by the department. Upon the fall of such an opponent Mr. Disraeli declined to remain perfectly silent, and in a spirit of graceful chivalry he delivered (April 18, 1864) a few complimentary words. "When an appeal," he said, "has been made to the opinion of the House by a right hon. gentleman on a matter affecting his personal honour, I do not see how hon. members on this side can be silent. At least I wish to express my own opinion, and I have risen to say for myself and for those around me, that we take the statement of the right hon. gentleman, as far as his personal honour is concerned, as perfectly satisfactory, and we estimate that honour, after his explanation to-night, as inviolate. . . . I have always opposed the right hon. gentleman as to the principles on which his policy, with regard to education, has been carried on; but I have always borne, and I now bear, my testimony to his distinguished talent, the clearness of his intellect, and the vigour with which he has conducted the public business; and I only regret that so much talent has been lost to the public service, chiefly, as it appears to me, from the right hon. gentleman in this, as in many other instances, not having been properly supported by his colleagues." Mr. Lowe fell, as many another unpopular man has fallen, not because of the faults he committed, but owing to the strong personal animosity he had it in his nature to excite.

Upon the two proposals for reform which were introduced this session, Mr. Disraeli did not speak. Mr. Locke King brought forward his usual county franchise bill, which was as usual rejected. Lord Palmerston spoke strongly against it in words which might have issued from the lips of the most bigoted Conservative. "I hardly think," he said, "it was expedient for my hon. friend to bring forward his bill at the present juncture, for it is plain that there does not now exist the

same anxiety for organic change which was observable some time ago. The fact is, that organic changes were introduced more as a means than as an end, the end being great improvement in the whole of our commercial legislation. All such changes as were desirable have long since been effected, as the result of our organic reforms, and therefore there is so much less desire for further innovations. There are also considerations connected with external affairs, tending to abate our anxieties for organic changes. The events which are taking place in other countries, and which are in a great measure the result of their constitutional systems, have made the people of this country much less anxious for change."

This plain speaking on the part of the prime minister was shortly afterwards counteracted by certain remarks which fell from Mr. Gladstone, who spoke in favour of a wide extension of the franchise, upon the bill introduced by Mr. Baines for lowering the franchise in the boroughs. With evident reference to the argument of Lord Palmerston, that since the people did not agitate for innovations reform was unnecessary, the chancellor of the exchequer exclaimed—"We are told that the working classes do not agitate; but is it desirable that we should wait till they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes upon any political subject whatever is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any parliamentary movement, but, on the contrary, to be deprecated, and, if possible, prevented by wise and provident measures. An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them, having leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is easily conducted. Every hour of their time has not a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the application of those hours to labour. But when a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly depen-

dent for his daily bread, it is only because then, in railway language, the danger-signal is turned on, and because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust in the rulers who have driven him to that necessity. The present state of things, I rejoice to say, does not indicate that distrust; but if we admit that, we must not allege the absence of agitation on the part of the working classes as a reason why the parliament of England and the public mind of England should be indisposed to entertain the discussion of this question." In spite, however, of this advocacy, the bill was defeated by a majority of fifty-six. After this expression of opinion, Mr. Gladstone was henceforth looked upon by the more decided Liberals as their champion, and as one to whom the fate of a future reform bill would be intrusted.

The budget was brought forward (April 4, 1864), and the chancellor of the exchequer had the satisfaction to announce to a very cordial House that, in spite of all adverse prognostications, he had a surplus in hand. Our gross exports and imports had mounted up to £444,000,000, being nearly three times as much as they had been in the year 1842, the date of the financial reforms introduced by Sir Robert Peel. The revenue was estimated at £69,460,000, the expenditure at £66,890,000, thus placing at the disposal of the chancellor of the exchequer a balance of £2,570,000. With this surplus Mr. Gladstone proposed to take off a penny in the pound from the income tax, to reduce the fire-insurance duty from three shillings to one shilling and sixpence so far as stock in trade was concerned, to make sundry reductions in the sugar duties, and, in short, to grant a relief from taxation to the extent of some £3,000,000. The budget was received with general satisfaction, and led to little discussion. The chief point raised was as to the advisability of reducing the malt tax. An important section of the agricultural interest was in favour of reducing the malt tax in preference to the sugar duties. Accordingly, when the sugar

duties were about to be considered, Colonel Barttelot moved "that the consideration of these duties be postponed until the House had had the opportunity of considering the expediency of the reduction of the duty upon malt." A brief debate ensued, during which the malt tax and the sugar duties were placed in antagonism; but on a division, the motion of Colonel Barttelot was rejected by a large majority.

This rejection was caused by the course Mr. Disraeli pursued, who on that occasion (April 14, 1864) supported the proposal of the government. He explained the reasons which had induced him to vote with the ministry. He was, he said, as much alive as most people were to the objections to the malt tax, and he was not surprised at the motion receiving the support of several of his friends. They had now for some time been lessening the prices of articles of drink to the wealthier classes, and he thought it was a natural conclusion, and one of a very grave character, that they should inquire whether it was not in their power to lighten the pressure which the price of beer imposed upon the limited resources of the humbler classes. Still he had always been of opinion that it was inexpedient to deal with the malt tax in any other fashion than in a large manner—in a manner which at least would insure some considerable alleviation of the public burdens; but as no such proposal was before them, he could not support the motion. A remission of one-fourth of the malt tax, as had been suggested—a remission, by the way, which would scarcely be of any avail—would compel the government to lay their hands not merely upon that portion of the surplus which was to be applied to the relief of the sugar duties, but also upon that portion which was consecrated to the remission of the income tax. The chief cause, however, which induced him to oppose the motion was his wish that the government should keep faith with the country. They were now at peace, and the war duties imposed

at the outbreak of the Crimean war ought therefore to be repealed.

"I have always felt," he said, "the political importance of terminating as soon as possible the war taxes, all the taxes specially connected with the Crimean struggle. If any great struggle were again to present itself, and an appeal to the people became necessary for a vast increase of direct taxation, and heavy imports upon the three great articles (malt, tea, and sugar) of public consumption, with what face could you appeal to them and expect the support of a high-spirited and patriotic nation, if they could turn round and say, 'In 1855, when the sovereign was engaged in a dangerous war, you came to us with a financial programme and induced us, by certain representations, to increase the direct and indirect taxes; but you have not complied with those terms, and you cannot expect us without a murmur to bear burdens which otherwise we would endeavour to bear.' It is said that the chancellor of the exchequer departed from the short line of that policy when he proposed the repeal of the paper duty. I am not answerable for the chancellor of the exchequer. I never spoke upon this subject without urging upon the House the necessity of relieving the country as soon as possible from these war taxes, not upon financial grounds, but from high political considerations; and when the chancellor of the exchequer brought forward his motion upon the paper duty, it was with the sanction and assistance of myself and others that a motion was made which proposed that we should remit the war duty upon tea instead of repealing the duty upon paper; and I would at that time have also proposed the remission of the war duty upon sugar, if circumstances had justified it. But the natural corollary to that proceeding, sanctioned, as I understand, by every gentleman who sits around me, was that as soon as possible, by getting rid of the war duty on sugar, we should terminate all those

increased burdens which the Russian war had placed upon us. This is the position in which we are placed, and therefore it is not for me to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of a duty on malt. I think I have given, in the course of my life, tolerable proof of my sincerity upon that subject. We staked our existence as a government upon carrying a measure which would have remitted one-half of the duty upon malt. That is not now the question. It is whether the House is not pledged, or feels itself pledged—I am myself pledged—by frequent votes, by more than financial considerations, by considerations of high policy, that it is our first duty to fulfil our engagements with the tax-paying people of the country, and to show that we are mindful of the engagements which, by the queen's ministers, we entered into in 1855; with the conviction that if we act with fairness and justice to them, if we appeal to them on a future occasion, on an equal struggle and in an equal emergency, we shall be responded to in a spirit as firm and as patriotic." A few weeks later on in the session Mr. Gladstone consented to remit the duty on malt used for the consumption of cattle.

A curious piece of ministerial negligence, which amounted to an evasion of parliamentary law, was at this time discovered by Mr. Disraeli, and led to some interesting observations. It appeared that five under-secretaries of state occupied seats in the House of Commons, whereas, according to law, only four could claim that privilege. The history of the legislation upon this subject was carefully explained by Mr. Disraeli (April 18, 1864). The tenure of office, so far as the House of Commons was concerned, he said, was regulated by the famous Act of Queen Anne. About the year 1708 there was a strong parliamentary opinion, if not a strong public opinion, that there were sufficient placemen in the House of Commons, and a resolution was passed that the number should not be increased. An Act accordingly became law, which declared

that henceforth any one who accepted an office of profit in the service of the crown, created after the year 1705, should thereby become incapable of election as a member of the House of Commons; heavy penalties were also attached to the violation of this statute. Seventy years passed on before any further legislation upon the subject took place.* Great events, great disasters had occurred during that long interval. We had lost our American colonies; the country was in a state of distress and despondency; and there arose, "as always in England under such circumstances," a cry for administrative and economical reform. Mr. Burke was then a minister of state, and it fell to his lot to consider by what means the administration might be improved and economy effected. Accordingly, in 1782, he brought forward his bill for economical reform, which, among other reductions, abolished the third secretary of state, who was the secretary of state for the colonies. The result of this bill was that two secretaries of state were permitted to sit in the House of Commons, and two under-secretaries.

Such, so far as the distribution of offices with reference to the House of Commons was concerned, was the state of affairs which prevailed for another seventy years, including the whole of the great revolutionary war. During that period new secretaries of state were created, who, of course, appointed under-secretaries; but they were appointed solely by the prerogative of the crown, not by statute, and none of them ever sat in the House of Commons. All offices created before 1705 were "old," all created subsequently were "new," or offices subject to the provisions of the statute of Anne. Thus, until the outbreak of the Crimean war, the invariable practice of parliament had been that only two secretaries of state and two under-secretaries could sit in the House

of Commons. In 1855 a third secretary of state, who was to be secretary of state for the department of war, was created, together with an under-secretary; and in the bill sanctioning the appointment, it was expressly stipulated that three under-secretaries of state might sit in the House of Commons, but "no more." Upon the expiration of the East India Company's charter, and upon the transfer of the vast possessions of India to the crown, a fourth secretary of state was appointed—the secretary of state for India—with the power of creating an under-secretary of state in place of the two joint-secretaries of the board of control that previously existed. It was also then distinctly laid down that four secretaries of state and four under-secretaries, but "no more," might have seats in the popular chamber.

Upon the distribution of offices in the two Houses, Mr. Disraeli thus expressed himself:—

"I would not myself lay down any inflexible rules, such as the laws of the Medes and Persians, with respect to the distribution, on the formation of a ministry, of the offices of state between the two Houses of parliament. On the whole, that must be left to the discretion of the person who undertakes the responsibility of forming an administration. But there are considerations which I think, generally speaking, ought to guide the individual called on by the sovereign to form a government, in regard to the distribution of offices. For example, I would venture to say that I think the heads of the two great departments of public expenditure should find seats in the House of Commons. I do not think the due control of this House over the public expenditure can be sufficiently possessed under other circumstances; and if the control of the House is diminished in that respect, its authority in the estimation of the country will proportionately suffer. With respect to the secretaries of state, I would say that the majority of them should have seats in the House of Commons—even

* Mr. Disraeli forgot the Act of 1742 for the purpose of further limiting and reducing the number of officers capable of sitting in the House of Commons.

a large majority of them, I would say, as was the case with the late government. The House upon reflection will see that in this matter the constitution has, in practice, adequately provided for the representation of the ministry in the other House of parliament. One secretary of state must have a seat in the House of Lords—at least, he cannot sit here; and therefore, he must find a seat in the House of Lords. The lord chancellor, one of the most eminent members of the cabinet, and the head of the jurisprudence of the country, must have a seat in the other House; the lord-president of the council must also be a peer, as must also be the lord privy-seal. The postmaster-general is by statute prohibited* from sitting in the House of Commons; and since the Reform Act—a measure which it was supposed would so greatly increase the influence and power of the popular branch of the legislature—the prime minister, in the majority of cases, has found a seat in the House of Lords. Added to this, the chief offices of the household, always held by peers, have sometimes been held by eminent statesmen—as by Lord Wellesley, for instance. I think no one can deny, therefore, that the constitution has provided adequately for the representation of the government in the House of Lords.”†

Mr. Disraeli then complained that in the present government the heads of departments were chiefly in the Upper House, and that ministers were represented in the House of Commons by under-secretaries, who were not treated by their chiefs with any extraordinary signs of respect. On

Lord Palmerston taking office, it had been said by an eminent Liberal (Lord Hartington) that “the government in this country ought to be conducted by the educated section of the Liberal party”—a phrase “more candid than felicitous,” which now signified “that the great offices of state in the new ministry were to be confided to the custody of half a dozen peers of the realm.” If he took only a party view of the arrangement, remarked Mr. Disraeli, he would be perfectly satisfied, since “nothing could tend more to the political degradation of the party opposite.” But there was something dearer than party triumph, and that was the character of the House of Commons; and, in his opinion, the present distribution of offices was calculated to diminish the authority and lower the character of the House of Commons. “I am sure,” he said, “that every honourable gentleman in this House feels really sorry when anything takes place that humiliates the character of this House, or places it in a position not calculated to preserve for it the confidence and support of the country. For my own part, believing that parliamentary government is practically impossible without two organized parties—that without them it would be the most contemptible and corrupt rule which could be devised—I always regret anything that may damage the just influence of either of the great parties in the state.” But, continued Mr. Disraeli, not only had the government, in their distribution of offices, chosen to ignore the House of Commons—not only was the government represented by under-

* It is only since 1831, when the office of postmaster-general of Great Britain and of Ireland was consolidated, that the appointment of postmaster-general has been considered a political office. Until the accession of George IV. it was held by two joint-commissioners, who were expressly disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons, on account of the office having been created in 1711, subsequent to the statute of Queen Anne, above quoted. In 1866 an Act was passed rendering the postmaster-general eligible for the House of Commons. When the postmaster-general is a member of the House of Lords, it is the duty of the secretary of the treasury to represent the department in the Lower House.

† In the first cabinet of George III. only one of its members was in the House of Commons, and thirteen in the Lords. In 1788 Mr. Pitt was the sole cabinet minister in the Commons. In 1801 four cabinet ministers were in

the Commons and four in the Lords. In 1804 Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh were, out of a cabinet of twelve, the only ministers in the Commons. In the Grenville ministry (“All the Talents”), of a cabinet of eleven, seven were in the Lords and four in the Commons. In 1809, of Mr. Perceval’s cabinet, six were peers and four were commoners. In 1812, in Lord Liverpool’s cabinet, ten were peers and only two commoners. In 1814 the commoners were increased to four, and the peers decreased to nine. In 1818, out of a cabinet of fourteen, six were commoners; and in 1822, out of a cabinet of fifteen, nine were peers. Since the reform bill of 1832 the leading members of the government have been more equally apportioned between the two Houses; and, as a general rule, the principles laid down by Mr. Disraeli on this occasion have been followed, more or less, in the distribution of offices.

secretaries—"gentlemen whose abilities we all recognize, who are frequently adequate to the offices they nominally hold, but who are obliged to encounter us upon questions which no one can properly treat who is not in the counsels of his sovereign, who is ignorant of the motives and the policy really pursued by the cabinet, and who cannot enter into those engagements and make those representations which the authority of ministers of the crown alone authorizes them to express"—not only was the government represented by under-secretaries of state, but, instead of the legitimate number of four, there were then five who had seats in the House. It was the duty of the House to see that its composition was complete and correct. It was most important that no one should vote in the House who was not entitled. Mr. Disraeli, therefore, concluded by moving, that as the law had been violated, the seat of the fifth under-secretary of state had been and was thereby vacated.

Lord Palmerston admitted that the government had, by an oversight, done that which the law did not authorize them; still the House must share the blame, for it was the duty of an Opposition to watch with a keen eye the conduct of the government, and to pick them up even before they fell. At the instigation of Sir George Grey, a select committee was appointed to inquire whether the under-secretary last appointed had thereby vacated his seat. The conclusion which the committee arrived at was, that the effect of the irregularity which had taken place was not to vacate the seat of any of the under-secretaries. A bill of indemnity was, however, brought in to release the under-secretaries from any possible penal consequences from the violation of the law. In the meantime the illegality complained of by Mr. Disraeli had ceased, owing to the acceptance, by an under-secretary of the home department, of the vice-presidency of the council of education, which thus reduced the number of under-secretaries to the constitutional limit.

All domestic questions, however, were lost in the interest with which the Dano-German struggle was followed. The progress of the Germans was loudly denounced, and the resistance of the Danes created throughout England the deepest sympathy. Towards the end of April a conference was held in London, though without an armistice, between the representatives of the powers concerned, to see if some amicable arrangement could not be arrived at. A few days before the meeting of the plenipotentiaries, Mr. Bernal Osborne moved "that it was unjust and inexpedient to insist on the provisions of the treaty of London of 1852, so far as they related to the order of succession in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, as a basis for the settlement of the Dano-German dispute." He blamed the foreign policy of the government with reference to the Schleswig-Holstein question, for having led Denmark to believe that if she resisted the demands of the German powers she would receive material assistance from England. He admitted that the sympathy of the country was naturally enlisted on the side of the Danes, who were gallantly fighting against terrible odds; yet it could not be denied that in the past Denmark had availed herself of her weakness to evade systematically her most solemn engagements, whilst her treatment of the duchies had been marked by the most arbitrary and tyrannical conduct.

Mr. Disraeli moved (April 19, 1864) the "previous question." It had been remarked, he said, that to propose the previous question in a discussion of this character implied a certain degree of confidence in the foreign policy of the government; therefore, not to gain any votes under false pretences, he begged at once to say that he had no confidence whatever in the foreign policy of the government. He thought the foreign policy of the government, especially during the last twelve months, was calculated to occasion very just and grave anxiety throughout the country. He objected to the course pursued by ministers towards

Poland; he objected to the manner in which France had been lured on with regard to the Polish question, and had then been deserted; and he strongly disapproved of the manner in which our refusal to attend the congress had been given. Why then, it was asked, did he not move a vote of want of confidence? He answered that he declined to do so because the necessary parliamentary papers, for him to arrive at a proper conclusion upon the subject, had not yet been laid before the House; and because by such a motion he would interfere with the negotiations that were about to be entered into. He would take his own time for such a step. He declined to fight the battle on the ground or at the time selected by his opponents. At the first fitting opportunity he would ask the House to pronounce its judgment on the foreign policy of the government; but he was the best judge of when such an opportunity should arrive.

"It is the fashion now," said Mr. Disraeli, "to taunt the Opposition on the ground that they have no policy, but it would be a new function for us if we had one. We are the constitutional critics of public affairs; but the originators of measures and inventors of a policy, the individuals who come forward with their schemes and suggestions for public approbation, are not the Opposition, but the ministers of the crown; and we stand here to criticise the suggestions and schemes which they bring forward, and which are founded on knowledge which we cannot share, and inspired no doubt by the feeling of responsibility under which they act." "My opinion," he concluded, "as far as I can form one, on the conduct of the government with respect to their management of Danish affairs, is such as I have always expressed, and I have seen nothing to change it. . . . As for the question, 'Are you for war or not?' I deny that that is the whole issue. I am not for war. I can contemplate with difficulty

the combination of circumstances which can justify war in the present age, unless the honour of the country is likely to suffer; but I can understand that things have been so mismanaged by Her Majesty's government as to be brought into a position which, had they been managed with firmness and at the same time with conciliation, they never would have occupied; and this system of government—of always supposing that the Gordian knot can only be cut—is one which will some day drift us again into war, as it drifted us into the Crimean war."

At the conclusion of the debate Mr. Osborne offered to withdraw his resolution, but to this the House would not consent. Mr. Disraeli then moved the "previous question," which was unanimously agreed to.

The conference had met, and hostilities had been suspended; but after deliberations, which were carried on with great secrecy during several weeks, the plenipotentiaries dispersed, not having been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Lord Russell had submitted, among other resolutions, the following to the conference:—"In order to prevent a future contest and to satisfy Germany, it would be necessary, in our opinion, entirely to separate Holstein, Lauenburg, and the southern part of Schleswig from the Danish monarchy. To justify so vast a sacrifice on the part of Denmark, and to maintain the independence of the Danish monarchy, it is desirable, in our opinion, that the line of the frontier should not be drawn more to the north than the mouth of the Schlei and the line of the Dannewerke." Denmark consented in principle to this proposal, but insisted that she should only be asked to cede Lauenburg on certain conditions. Austria and Prussia declined to accede to the proposed boundary line, and adhered to the one first traced by themselves from Apenrade to Tondern. Secret as these deliberations had been conducted, enough had transpired to alarm the Opposition. The government had declared that

the only principle on which they could go into the conference was that of maintaining the integrity of Denmark. But now ugly rumours were circulated—hinted at in newspapers and discussed at clubs—that the government, under pretence of serving and defending Denmark, were in reality betraying her. England, it was said, had pushed Denmark from concession to concession; first she had forced her to retire from Holstein, then to abandon Rendsburg, then to consent to an armistice, then to abandon Schleswig south of the Schlei; and now it was stated that Lord Palmerston intended to yield to the demand of the Germans, and hand over a Danish population to German rule. Were these stories true? Were ministers loyal to their policy as to the integrity of Denmark? It was all very well to say that the House of Commons should not interfere whilst negotiations were proceeding; but how if the government were betraying the trust reposed in them? Was all discussion to be stifled upon this principle, and the country to be hoodwinked?

Mr. Disraeli brought the matter (June 6, 1864) before parliament. He knew nothing, he remarked, in their parliamentary system which was more to be admired than the reserve which was maintained in parliament when it was known that the government were engaged on important negotiations, upon which the question of peace or war might turn. He thought it a characteristic of their system, which marked it out from all other attempts at parliamentary government, and was one of the surest guarantees for the endurance of constitutional rule. Still they must remember that parliamentary reserve under those circumstances depended upon one constitutional condition, and when that was observed the parliamentary reserve was perfectly intelligible and constitutional. The condition of the reserve of parliament, when a government was engaged in negotiations, was that parliament should be acquainted with the principles upon which the nego-

tiations were conducted and approved of by the general policy of the government. That was the condition which had always been acknowledged, and on which the salutary system of parliamentary reserve under those circumstances was founded. Was that condition now being fulfilled? Were they convinced that the policy, so frankly announced by the government as to the maintenance of the integrity of Denmark, was being pursued? He did not ask for any details, he did not expect any minute communications; but it would be satisfactory, both for the House and the country, to know that the policy which the government had announced was being carried out at the meetings of the conference. Reports to the contrary had been circulated, and if true, they should be openly avowed; if false, they should be as boldly denied. It was neither the duty of the House nor the government to keep silence under such circumstances. The House of Commons had supported the prime minister because he had frankly declared that the government had entered the conference for a definite object, and with a definite view—to maintain the integrity and independence of Denmark.

"We do not want," exclaimed Mr. Disraeli, "to hold the noble lord pedantically to the fulfilment of any particular detail which he may have announced at such a moment; all we want is that the spirit of his policy shall be observed and maintained. It was because we credited the noble lord with this assurance that we were silent. A suspension of arms took place for a month; and that I held to be an incident of great importance, having ventured to remind the House that a conference without an armistice or a suspension of hostilities is generally fruitless and unsatisfactory. The month has now expired, or is about to expire; and were there no rumours or suppositions, no causes to justify men in thinking that that is happening which is not for the honour or interests of England; were there no causes

existing to make the House suppose that the policy of Her Majesty's government has in any way changed; were everything as smooth as a summer sea, and were there no grounds for anxiety and dark mistrust in the public mind—it would still, I maintain, have been the office and the duty of the minister, on an occasion such as the expiration of an armistice, to come forward and give some account to parliament of the progress of these negotiations. He at least ought to have re-assured the public mind, and given them some confidence in the conduct of these discussions, and have reiterated the spirit of that policy which parliament had sanctioned, if not by a formal vote, at least by its silence. The House will see that the noble lord ought to be called to account, even if there were no cause for anxiety. But if what I have ventured to call a wild hypothesis be true, if it be the fact that Her Majesty's government in this interval have entirely changed their policy, if they themselves are participating in the partition of Denmark, which only five months ago they were stirring up an European war to prevent, then I say it is a mockery of the House of Commons if, under such circumstances, the noble lord remains silent." Lord Palmerston, however, declined to make any disclosures. He was, he said, tongue-tied, and must wait till the time had arrived for revelations.

The House had not to remain long in suspense. The conference broke up towards the end of July, the belligerent powers being unable, as we have said, to agree upon a boundary-line satisfactory to each, and hostilities were resumed the next day. The prime minister laid the whole matter before the House of Commons. He sketched the history of the dispute, the progress of the quarrel between Denmark and Germany, and the proceedings that had taken place at the conference from its commencement to its collapse. "We laboured," said Lord Palmerston (June 27, 1864), "by every possible means, in conjunction with the other neutral

powers, to bring the parties to an agreement; and we felt it as a calamity, as everybody must, that war should begin again for a matter which might so easily, we think, be adjusted, and for a question not involving the existence of a nation or of a government, but simply relating to a comparatively small district of territory. That having unfortunately happened, it became the duty of Her Majesty's government to consider the course which it behoved them to adopt. We felt great sympathy for Denmark. We felt that although she had in the beginning been in the wrong, another sovereign had succeeded to the throne, that a different ministry had the direction of her affairs, and that there had been manifested by acts a strong desire to set that right which had been wrong. We felt that from the beginning to the end of these last events she had been ill-used, and that might had over-ridden right. We knew, also, that the sympathies of almost the whole British nation were in favour of Denmark. We should, therefore, have been glad to have found it possible to recommend our sovereign to take part with Denmark in the approaching struggle. But, on the other hand, it was to be considered that whatever wrongs Denmark had sustained, and they were many, she had in the origin been in the wrong herself; that she had in the end, and at the very last conference, rejected a proposal reasonable in itself, which, if it had been accepted by the two parties, would necessarily have led to a peaceful solution of the question in dispute. Her fault in that, no doubt, is equally shared by her antagonists; but still, in considering the position which England ought to adopt, that matter could not be left out of sight. Well then, it was to be considered what really was the matter in dispute for which hostilities were to begin, and it did not appear that that matter was one of very great importance; it did not affect the independence of Denmark, and it went very little beyond what she herself had agreed to. It consisted simply in the

question to whom a portion of territory should belong. On the other hand, as men who were considering what advice in a very important European question, for I do not disguise its importance, should be given to their sovereign and recommended to parliament, we could not lose sight of the magnitude of the object, the magnitude of the resistance which would have to be overcome, and the comparative means which England and her supposed antagonists would have to bring to bear upon the contest.

"It had been ascertained early in these transactions that France, for reasons of which she was entitled to be the judge, had declined to take any active measures in support of Denmark [France had not forgotten or forgiven the refusal of England to attend her proposed congress at Paris], and we knew that that disposition still continued unchanged. We had ascertained that Russia, for reasons for which she also was entitled to be the judge, was not inclined to take any active measures in support of Denmark. The whole brunt, therefore, of the effort to dislodge the German troops, and those who might come to their assistance from Schleswig and Holstein, would fall upon this country alone. Well, we have not thought it consistent with our duty to give our sovereign advice to undertake such an enterprise. We know the honourable sympathy which the people of this country feel for the unhappy condition of Denmark; but at the same time, we do not feel it to be consistent with our duty to recommend to parliament and the country to make this great exertion, and to undergo the great sacrifices which must be the consequence of entering into such a conflict with the whole of Germany. I assume that in the present state of things, upon which our decision is made, the real contest lies between Germany and Denmark with regard to—I am afraid I can hardly say—that part of Schleswig in dispute, because it is impossible to say that the dispute may not apply to the whole of

Schleswig. It would be more honourable, on the part of Germany, to be content with that which they demanded; but we know that strength and success frequently carry men beyond that line which, on cooler reflection, they might have been disposed to insist upon. Still the conflict is as regards Schleswig, and not as regards the independence of Denmark, or the capital of the Danish monarchy. I do not mean to—and I think it right to put in that reservation—I do not mean to say that if the war should assume a different character, if the existence of Denmark as an independent power in Europe should be at stake, if we had reason to expect we should see at Copenhagen the horrors of a town taken by assault, the destruction of property, the sacrifice of the lives not only of its defenders but of its peaceful inhabitants, the confiscation which would arise, the capture of the sovereign as a prisoner of war, or events of that kind—I do not mean to say that if any of these events were likely to happen, the position of this country might not possibly be a fit subject for re-consideration, or that other counsel might not properly be taken. But this I say on the part of Her Majesty's government, that if any change of policy were thought desirable, such a change would be communicated to parliament, if parliament were sitting; and if parliament were not sitting, the earliest opportunity would be taken of asking its judgment."

To Lord Palmerston succeeded Mr. Disraeli. He had no intention, said the leader of the Opposition, on this occasion, to enter into a general discussion respecting the transactions that had taken place between Denmark and Germany, and the policy of the English government with regard to them. That he would refer to a future time. He rose merely to remind the House of the exact position which it now occupied. As far as the negotiations of the government with respect to the dispute between Denmark and Germany were concerned, the House had incurred no respon-

sibility whatever. It had given no opinion upon the subject. It had expressed no approbation whatever of the conduct of the government. It had respected the prerogatives of the crown and the functions of constituted ministers, and had therefore pursued a wise, a temperate, and a patriotic course. But the time had now arrived, continued Mr. Disraeli, when some opinion ought to be pronounced by the House, and he intended to take the earliest opportunity to ascertain that opinion. The conference had met without hope, and it rose without hope; it met without a basis, and therefore it had led to no result. He had heard with astonishment, from the statement of the prime minister, that the islands of Denmark were only necessary to the independence of that country. Then, why had the government been committed to a policy which had so long and so pertinaciously declared, that the possession of Schleswig and Holstein by the crown of Denmark was necessary to the balance of power and to the maintenance of the public law of Europe?

The truth was that the whole foreign policy of the government had been one series of miserable blunders; it had been based on senseless and spiritless menaces, which had impaired the just influence of England in the councils of Europe, and by impairing that influence, had diminished the most effectual means of maintaining peace. Judging from the past, sarcastically observed Mr. Disraeli, he would prefer that the affairs of the country should be conducted on the principle of Messrs. Bright and Cobden, rather than on the policy avowed by the government of Lord Palmerston. "I think that, in that case," he said, "as the consequences would almost be the same, our position would be more consistent; it would certainly be more profitable, and in my opinion it would really be more dignified. At least those honourable gentlemen would threaten nobody; at least they would not tell Denmark that if she is attacked she will not

find herself alone; at least they would not exasperate Germany by declaiming in the full parliament of England against the 'aggravated outrages' of her policy; at least they would not lure on Denmark by delusive counsels and fallacious hopes. I declare that, in my opinion, the position of England would be more dignified if the policy which those honourable members profess regulated our affairs, rather than the policy by which the noble lord seeks to guide us." He concluded by stating, amid ringing cheers, that he would venture to ask the opinion of the House of Commons on the policy of the government, and he would take care that no unnecessary delay occurred before he availed himself of that privilege.

His promise was soon fulfilled. It was felt by many that the government, by their policy of empty brag, richly deserved parliamentary censure, and the motion of Mr. Disraeli was eagerly looked for. Early in July resolutions, which amounted to a distinct vote of censure, were moved in the Upper House by Lord Malmesbury, and in the Lower House by Mr. Disraeli. Owing to the absence of Lord Derby, the debate in the House of Lords was robbed of much of the brilliancy that it would otherwise have possessed; and consequently it was in the discussion in the House of Commons that public interest was chiefly centred. In the presence of one of those intensely crowded Houses which seasons of great excitement never fail to assemble, Mr. Disraeli rose (July 4, 1864) to move—"That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty to thank Her Majesty for having directed the correspondence on Denmark and Germany, and the protocol of the conference recently held in London, to be laid before parliament; to assure Her Majesty that we have heard with deep concern that the sittings of the conference have been brought to a close without accomplishing the important purpose for which it was convened; and to express to Her Majesty our great regret that, while the course pursued by Her Majesty's government has

failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace."

He thus began:—"Some of the longest and most disastrous wars of modern Europe have been wars of succession. The Thirty Years' War was a war of succession. It arose from a dispute respecting the inheritance of a duchy in the north of Europe, not very distant from that duchy of Holstein which now engages general attention. There are two causes why wars originating in a disputed succession become usually of a prolonged and obstinate character. The first is internal ambition, and the second foreign ambition. Sometimes a domestic party, under such circumstances, has an understanding with a foreign potentate; and again, the ambition of that foreign potentate excites the distrust, perhaps the envy of other powers; and the consequence is, generally speaking, that the dissensions thus created lead to prolonged and complicated struggles. I apprehend—indeed, I entertain no doubt—that it was in the contemplation of such circumstances possibly occurring in our time, that the statesmen of Europe some thirteen years ago—knowing that it was probable that the royal line of Denmark would cease, and that upon the death of the then king his dominions would be divided and in all probability disputed—gave their best consideration to obviate the recurrence of such calamities to Europe."

Mr. Disraeli then sketched the history of the treaty of London of 1852, and showed that under that treaty England had incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and Russia. He touched upon the dispute between the German Diet and the King of Denmark, and was of opinion—since the controversy was strictly federal, and not international—that the interference of England in the matter was uncalled for.

The other powers of Europe, who were equally interested and equally bound to interfere, did not interpose as the English government had. England had declared that, whatever was the issue of the quarrel between Denmark and Germany, she would not permit the integrity or independence of Denmark to suffer. "We are asked," Lord Palmerston had said, "what is the policy of Her Majesty's government respecting that dispute. We concur with all reasonable men in Europe, including those in France or Russia, in desiring that the independence, the integrity, and the rights of Denmark may be maintained. We are convinced—I am, at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow those rights and interfere with that independence, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend." That, commented the leader of the Opposition, was a statesman-like declaration of policy, which produced no little effect on the Continent. Yet what came of it? France had, at the commencement of the dispute, expressed herself as desirous of acting in concert with this government in the matter; but England had offended France by withdrawing her co-operation in the Polish question and by refusing to attend the proposed congress at Paris; consequently the Emperor of the French, when called upon, had declined to take any active part in protecting Denmark from her German foe. France resolved to be strictly neutral. General Fleury had said to Lord Wodehouse at Copenhagen, "that his own instructions from the emperor were not to take part in any negotiations here, but to tell the Danish government explicitly that if Denmark became involved in a war with Germany, France would not come to her assistance."

Such a course was perfectly straightforward and intelligible, and if England had adopted it no objection would have been raised. "We were not bound," said Mr. Disraeli, "by the treaty of 1852 to go

to the assistance of Denmark if she became involved in a war with Germany. No one pretends that we were. As a matter of high policy, much as we may regret any disturbance in the territorial limits of Europe, being a country the policy of which is a policy of tranquillity and peace, there were no adequate considerations which could have justified England in entering into an extensive European war, without allies, to prevent a war between Germany and Denmark. That was, I say, an honourable and intelligible course." However, continued the leader of the Opposition, instead of adopting such a policy, the government invented a process of conduct which was without example in the history of the country; it consisted of menaces never accomplished, and promises never fulfilled. They declared to Denmark that the treaty of 1852 should be maintained, and they sent despatches to Germany threatening that "if the overthrow of the dynasty now reigning in Denmark is sought by Germany, the most serious consequences may ensue." What followed these warlike utterances? They were calmly ignored by Germany, and the Federal execution took place. Panic-stricken, the government again appealed to France, and was again repulsed. Then came the invasion of Schleswig. Once more France was appealed to, and once more the appeal was in vain. "The emperor," replied the French foreign minister—and his words since recent events have a curious interest—"the emperor would feel repugnance to any course which should bind him to oppose in arms the wishes of Germany. It may be comparatively easy for England to carry on a war which can never go beyond maritime operations of blockade and capture of ships. Schleswig and England are far apart from each other. But the soil of Germany touches the soil of France, and a war between France and Germany would be one of the most burdensome, and one of the most hazardous, in which the French empire could engage. Besides these con-

siderations, the emperor cannot fail to recollect that he has been made an object of mistrust and suspicion in Europe on account of his supposed projects of aggrandizement on the Rhine. A war commenced on the frontiers of Germany could not fail to give strength to these unfounded and unwarrantable imputations. For these reasons the government of the emperor will not take at present any engagement on the subject of Denmark. If hereafter the balance of power should be seriously threatened, the emperor may be inclined to take new measures in the interest of France or of Europe. But for the present the emperor reserves to his government entire liberty."

Still, in spite of this snub from Paris, the government continued its interference and the issue of its meaningless menaces. It interfered in the internal affairs of Denmark, it railed at Prussia, and waxed wroth at Austria. Yet no assistance was given, no active measures supported our threats. Denmark was left to fight out matters for herself, and the German forces proceeded with their hostile aims. Europe laughed at us; we would interfere, we would write despatches, we would be brave or firm on paper, but we would not fight. Then came the London conference. "The conference lasted six weeks," said Mr. Disraeli. "It wasted six weeks. It lasted as long as a carnival, and, like a carnival, it was an affair of masks and mystification. Our ministers went to it as men in distressed circumstances go to a place of amusement—to while away the time with a consciousness of impending failure. However, the summary of the conference is this—that Her Majesty's government made two considerable proposals. They proposed, first, the dismemberment of Denmark. So much for its integrity. They proposed, in the second place, that the remainder of Denmark should be placed under the guarantee of the great powers. They would have created another Turkey in Europe, or the same geographical relation, the scene of the

same rival intrigues, and the same fertile source of constant misconceptions and wars. So much for the independence of Denmark. These two propositions having been made—the one disastrous to the integrity, and the other to the independence of Denmark—the conference, nevertheless, even with these sacrifices offered, was a barren failure.”

At what conclusion, he asked, and loud were the cheers that the question called forth, could the House arrive as to the management of foreign affairs by the government? Ministers had pledged themselves to maintain the independence and integrity of Denmark, and they had miserably betrayed the faith reposed in them. Denmark had been tempted into resistance, and when the hour of trial came upon her, had been deserted by the very power who had held out hopes of aid and support. Austria had been menaced; Prussia had been menaced; but the threats had been idle, and ministers had stood on one side, and had basely eaten their words. No one blamed France for the course she pursued, for she had held out no hopes; everyone blamed England, for she had held out hopes, and then had declined to fulfil them. “Do you see,” cried Mr Disraeli, “in the management of these affairs that capacity, and especially that kind of capacity, that is adequate to the occasion? Do you find in it that sagacity, that prudence, that dexterity, that quickness of perception, and those conciliatory moods which we are always taught to believe necessary in the transaction of our foreign affairs? Is there to be seen that knowledge of human nature, and especially that peculiar kind of science most necessary in these affairs—an acquaintance with the character of foreign countries, and with the chief actors in the scene? For my part, I find all these qualities wanting; and in consequence of the want of these qualities, I see that three results have accrued. The first is that the avowed policy of Her Majesty’s government has failed. The second is that our just influence in the councils of Europe has been lowered.

Thirdly, in consequence of our just influence in the councils of Europe being lowered, the securities for peace are diminished.”

What could be more humiliating than the position of England? he continued. We had given advice, and our advice had been scorned. We had pleaded, and our prayers had not been listened to. We had menaced, and our threats had been received with ridicule. Within twelve months we had twice been repulsed at St. Petersburg. Twice had we supplicated in vain at Paris. We had menaced Austria, and Austria had allowed our menaces to pass her like the idle wind. We had threatened Prussia, and Prussia had defied us. Our objurgations had rattled over the head of the German Diet, and the German Diet had treated us with contempt. What a situation for a great power! What a situation for a power which was essentially a moderating and mediatorial power! “It is not for us,” concluded Mr. Disraeli, “it is not for any man in this House, to indicate to the ministers what should be the foreign policy of the country. The most we can do is to tell the noble lord what is not our policy. We will not threaten, and then refuse to act. We will not lead on our allies with expectations we do not intend to fulfil. And, sir, if it ever be the lot of myself, and of those with whom I act, to carry on important negotiations of this country, as the noble lord and his colleagues have done, I trust we shall not, at least, carry them on in such a manner as that it will be our duty to come to Parliament and announce that we have no ally, and then to declare that England can never act alone. Sir, these are words that ought never to have escaped the lips of any British minister. They are sentiments which ought never to have entered his heart. I repudiate them and reject them. I remember that there was a time when England had not a tithe of our resources, when, inspired by a patriotic cause, she triumphantly encountered a world in arms. And, sir, I believe now, if the occasion were fitting, and our independence and our

honour were attacked and assailed, if our empire were endangered, I believe that England would arise in the magnificence of her might, and struggle triumphantly for those objects for which men live and nations flourish. But, sir, I for one will never consent to go to war to extricate British ministers from the consequences of their own indiscretion; and it is in this spirit that I have drawn up this address to the crown. I have drawn it up in the spirit in which the royal speech was delivered at the commencement of this session. I am ready to vindicate the honour of this country when it is necessary, but I have drawn it up in the interests of peace."

This resolution led to a debate which lasted four nights, and in which all the conspicuous parliamentary ability of the hour took part. It was felt that the fall of the government turned upon the verdict of the House, and both sides exerted their utmost to obtain votes, and by their strictures and abuse to weaken the onslaught of their opponents. In whose favour the decision would result was doubtful, for both parties were fairly equally divided, and Lord Palmerston had created various enemies among his own party on account of his meddling, yet humiliating foreign policy, his extravagance in the erection of the different fortifications, and his abandonment of the cause of reform. In the House of Lords the resolution of Lord Malmesbury had been carried by a majority; but a Liberal government is generally in a minority among the peers, and therefore the decision, since it was expected, did not have much weight. The interest of the country was confined to the division of the House of Commons; even the most sanguine Liberal could not feel assured that his party would be victorious. "It will be a near thing," said a sporting member; "but 'Pam.' for choice."

The chancellor of the exchequer followed Mr. Disraeli. He justified the course adopted by the government, and denied that the influence of England had been lowered in the councils of Europe. The

policy of ministers had been to bring Denmark to fulfil her engagements of 1852, and to cause Prussia and Austria to moderate their views. The government, it was true, had failed to obtain the co-operation of the powers, but the parties really responsible for the consequences of the failure, were those who first receded from the treaty. After the refusal of France and Russia, the tone of the government had of course altered, since the interference of England single-handed would have been useless. Mr. Gladstone was especially severe upon the wording of Mr. Disraeli's resolution. It was nothing better, he said, than the echo of the ribald language of a few obscure journals of Germany. "This is the very first occasion," he cried, "that the British House of Commons has been called upon, for the sake of displacing a government, to record the degradation of its country. Why cannot the hon. gentleman speak plainly in his motion? Why does he not adopt the language of our forefathers, who, when they were dissatisfied with a government, addressed the crown, and prayed that the government might be dismissed? They said boldly that the conduct of the government was open to such and such charges, and they prayed that other men might be put in their places. But the right hon. gentleman was afraid to raise that issue. He has, indeed, plucked up courage to propose this motion; but why has he not done it in the proper constitutional form in which votes of want of confidence have hitherto been drawn? Never before, as far as I know, has party spirit led gentlemen in this country to frame a motion which places on record that which must be regarded as dishonourable to the nation. I go back to the time of Sir Robert Walpole, of Lord North and Mr. Fox, but nowhere do we find such a sterile and jejune affair as this resolution. Those charges were written in legible and plain terms; but the right hon. gentleman substitutes language which might, indeed, be sufficient for the purpose of rendering it impossible for the

government to continue in office, but which cannot transfix them without its sting first passing through the honour of England. For the reasons I have stated, I look forward with cheerfulness to the issue which has been raised with regard to our conduct. Nay, more, I feel the most confident anticipation that both the House and the country will approve of the course taken in this difficult negotiation by Her Majesty's government, and that they will respect a motion which both prudence and patriotism must alike emphatically condemn."

Mr. Kinglake moved that the following words be substituted for the last paragraph of the resolution:—"To express the satisfaction with which we have learned that at this conjuncture Her Majesty has been advised to abstain from armed interference in the war now going on between Denmark and the German powers." He did not consider, he said, that the strength of England had been impaired by the recent negotiations. He objected to encouragement being given by strong powers to weaker powers to resist, and he could not find that in any instance the government had advised the Danes to resist. Lord Stanley, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Roebuck, all spoke in condemnation of the foreign policy of the government. Mr. Horsman, as became so original a genius, took a line of his own. He admitted that the foreign policy of the government had failed; but he did not consider that the failure had been so injurious to our national influence that the government deserved censure. The House had acquiesced in the policy of the government, and had even directed it. The policy of the government was only ministerial; and if the country had been dishonoured, it was not by the ministry but by parliament. By holding their peace the Opposition had incurred a complicity in every act of the government, and therefore responsibility for the consequences. Mr. Horsman then discussed at length the Danish question, offering his advice freely upon all points in dispute. The

conclusion he arrived at was that the government had made mistakes, but the Opposition had endorsed them—so that parties were pretty much on an equality.

The comic man upon the occasion was Mr. Bernal Osborne, and he was very funny; he did not hold office, and this neglect from his party doubtless added both point and venom to his criticisms upon the chief of the cabinet. He was not anxious, he observed, to pass judicial sentence upon the proceedings of the government in the Dano-German question. Their failure had to some extent involved the honour of the country, and although he rejoiced at the return of ministers to the paths of peace, the country had no reason to be proud of the means. However, it was his opinion that the individual mainly to blame for complication and failure was the prime minister. "Let us see," he said amid the loud laughter of the House, "how his ministry is constituted. There is the noble lord the first minister. I wish to speak of him with every respect, because a more active and able man in the performance of his duty has seldom existed in this House. I may say of him that 'panting time toils after him in vain.' He is certainly *facile princeps*, and is the liveliest, if not the youngest, man on the treasury bench. He deserves credit for his admirable management of affairs during a long course of years. He has acted with all sorts of men, and agreed with all sorts of opinions. Why, he has contrived a most extraordinary feat—he has conciliated both the Low Church and the high Tory party. The *Record* acknowledges his inspiration, and the hon. member for North Warwickshire (Mr. Newdegate), bows to his influence. These are great feats. But what is his policy? In his domestic policy he is paternal, but stationary. His foreign policy up to this day has been pugnacious and progressive. But now he is about to achieve the most wonderful feat of his life, for he is about to go to the country as the apostle and minister of peace, and will be supported by the member for Birmingham.

That is the most extraordinary feat of the whole. I do not think I have been unfair to the noble lord. Well, coming to the cabinet, it is a museum of curiosities. There are some birds of rare and noble plumage, both alive and stuffed. But, unfortunately, there is a difficulty in keeping up the breed, and it was found necessary to cross it with the famous Peellites. I will do them the justice to say that they have a very great and able minister amongst them in the chancellor of the exchequer, and it is to his measures alone that they owe the little popularity and the little support they get from this Liberal party. But it cannot be said by their enemies or friends that they have been prolific in measures since they have been in office. Then there is my right hon. friend who is not connected with the Whigs by family (Mr. Milner Gibson).^{*} He is like some 'fly in amber,' and the wonder is how the devil he got there. The hon. member for Rochdale (Mr. Cobden) and the hon. member for Birmingham must have been disappointed, I think, in this 'young man from the country.' When he married into the family we expected some liberal measures from him; but the right hon. gentleman has become insolent and almost quarrelsome under the guidance of the noble lord. Well, what are we to expect? We know by the traditions of the great Whig party that they will cling to the vessel, if not like shipwrecked sailors, at least like those testaceous marine fish which adhere to the bottom, thereby clogging the engines and impeding the progress. Should a vote of this House displace the administration, what are the Liberal party to do? If I might advise the Liberal party, I should say they may be perfectly happy as to the issue of this great duel. They are somewhat in the position of Iago, when he exclaims—'If Cassio kill Roderigo or Roderigo kill Cassio, or each do kill the

other, every way makes my gain!' Even should this parliament decide on terminating its own and their existence, they will find consolation that the funeral oration will be pronounced by the hon. member for North Warwickshire, and that some friendly hand will inscribe on their mausoleum, 'Rest and be thankful.'"

Lord Palmerston then entered upon his defence. To divide upon the resolution of Mr. Disraeli might have been hazardous; so, like the astute tactician he was, he accepted the amendment of Mr. Kinglake. He began by warmly upholding the policy of Earl Russell; he maintained that England stood as high as ever in the estimation of Europe; and declared that the assertion that the influence of the country had been lowered, was a gratuitous libel upon the nation by a great party who hoped to rule it. Then cleverly avoiding any further discussion upon the subject, he spoke at length upon the benefits the country had derived from his government—how taxation had been reduced, how the national debt had been diminished, how the public expenditure had been cut down, and how the income or the trade of the country had been increased. Such being the case, he thought the government had conducted the affairs of the country with honour and advantage, and in a manner deserving the approbation of the House. He was confident that the acceptance of Mr. Disraeli's resolution would not be in accordance with the general feeling of the people of the country.

Upon the fourth night the leader of the Opposition rose up to close the debate. The tone of the discussion, he said, had fully justified the course he had taken, for, in spite of the numerous speeches, none had refuted the arguments he had brought forward, or had satisfactorily denied the charges he had directed against the government. It had been said that the course he had taken was open to objection. If the government had mismanaged the affairs of the country, the Opposition ought to have

^{*} Mr. Milner Gibson began political life as a Conservative. Having changed his opinions, he became one of the most prominent members of the Anti-Corn Law League, and during the Crimean war was a stout advocate for peace.

addressed the crown to dismiss the ministers. He contested that view. Take the case of the fall of the administration of Lord Shelburne. A peace had been concluded with France, Spain, and America, the independence of our colonies being recognized. Lord Shelburne negotiated that peace. The papers were laid on the table; the Opposition did not approve that peace; and how did they proceed? Did they address the crown for the dismissal of ministers? On the contrary, they took a perfectly different course, but not so decided a course as he himself had recommended, and was prepared to vindicate. They proceeded by resolution. Lord George Cavendish moved among others "That the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain were greater than they were entitled to." That was not only a proceeding by resolution, but by a resolution which showed at least that the government had granted concessions which they were not entitled to make. He had, therefore, a precedent for proceeding by way of resolution.

It had also been brought against him, continued Mr. Disraeli, that there was something unparliamentary, even disgraceful, in the House of Commons proposing, in an address to the crown, to make an allusion to the just influence of the country being lowered. It was language, it was said, which, in the great days of the Norths and the Foxes, would never have been adopted. Again he would illustrate his position by a precedent. He took the address moved by Mr Fox on one of the most celebrated occasions of the kind that had ever occurred. If Her Majesty's ministers preferred to accept it instead of his own, which was a more modest address, adapted to the temperate spirit of the time, he would be perfectly ready to make arrangements to that effect. This is what Mr. Fox said in his address to the crown:—"We can neither give any credit to the ministry for their profession of a wish for peace, nor repose any confidence in their capacity for conducting negotiations to prosperous issues, odious as they are to

any enemy, and contemptible in the eyes of Europe, from the display of insincerity and incapacity which has marked their conduct." Those were the expressions used by Mr. Fox in his address to the crown in 1796. He, quietly remarked Mr Disraeli, had not used such language in his own address.

In his opinion, proceeded the leader of the Opposition, the course the government had resolved upon to meet this discussion was neither frank nor straightforward. The real question at issue was this—"Is the House, or is it not, satisfied with the administration of the government in these negotiations?" It was a vote of want of confidence in the conduct of ministers. Why, then, did the government fall back upon the amendment of Mr. Kinglake? What was that amendment? It was the "previous question" drawn up by an amateur diplomatist, and moved by the historian of the campaign in the Crimea, as a compliment, he supposed, to the Emperor of the French. "The issue before the House," said Mr. Disraeli, "will be the amendment of the hon. member for Bridgewater, which gives no approbation to the conduct of the government, as far as I can understand it; although they argue on the merits of their case, the government will not take the opinion of the House boldly upon it. That, I think, is not acting with the fairness we should have expected from the government."

Mr. Disraeli then touched upon the advice so freely tendered by the member for Stroud, and conferred upon Mr. Horsman one of those stinging nicknames which sums up a character in a word or two, and which henceforth becomes inseparable from the individual thus re-christened. Mr. Horsman was a very prominent member of the Liberal party; he had held office, and was undoubtedly a power in the House of Commons. His influence, however, would have been greater in the assembly had he possessed a less exalted opinion of his own judgment, and a more complimentary estimate of the intelligence of the rest of mankind. He was one of those men who

never descend from the moral and intellectual pedestal upon which their intense egotism has raised them; he inclined neither to argument nor to conversation, but to lecture, to warn, to advise, to constitute himself on every occasion "Sir Oracle." These were his delight, and it must frankly be owned that it was a joy he freely availed himself of. He considered his sentiments as opinions, and he mistook his prejudices for ideas. He piqued himself upon his originality; but his originality chiefly consisted in holding opinions different from the rest of the world around him. Mr. Horsman had taunted the Opposition for not interfering sooner, and therefore had accused them of complicity with the government. Why, then, asked Mr. Disraeli, had not Mr. Horsman himself interfered? Why had he not moved in this question? "He denounces the government," cried Mr. Disraeli; "he derides the Opposition; he detests the peace party; he attacks the whole body of the House of Commons; and he lectures parliament as a body, and every individual in particular, with a recklessness of assertion unequalled." Yet all that this sweeping critic had done in the matter had been, some months ago, to put on paper a motion which was without exception the most unconstitutional that had ever been placed on the table of the House of Commons—a motion which had not been moved, and which, had it been moved, would have been left without a teller had it been put to the vote. "We know," said Mr. Disraeli, "that in private life there is always in every circle some person, male or female, who is regarded as a *superior person*. They decide on everything, they lecture everybody; all acknowledge their transcendent qualities; but everyone gets out of their way. The right hon. member for Stroud is the 'superior person' of the House of Commons." This definition of character, and its application, were received with shouts of laughter, and from that night Mr. Horsman passed into history, so long as it should care to preserve his name, as the "superior person."

On the division the tactics of Lord Palmerston prevailed; the numbers for Mr. Disraeli's motion were 295; for the amendment, 313; majority for ministers, 18. The victory was greeted with loud and continued cheers from the ministerialists, and it was felt that the result of the contest had tended greatly to strengthen the hands of the government. It was the last important debate of the session, and parliament was prorogued by commission July 29, 1864.

Before the close of the year Mr. Disraeli delivered another of his important speeches (November 25, 1864) on the policy of the Church of England. It was on the occasion of a meeting held in aid of the Oxford Diocesan Society for the augmentation of small benefices, at which the Bishop of Oxford presided. After a few observations upon the conclusion which public opinion had now arrived at with regard to the necessity of the union between church and state, Mr. Disraeli recapitulated what he had before said on a similar occasion as to the various modes by which the nationality of the church might be assisted. These modes were education, a temperate plan for the extension of the episcopate, the co-operation of the laity with the clergy to erase from the public mind "that vulgar and pernicious error that the church is a merely clerical corporation," the assertion of the rights and duties of churchmen existing in their parochial constitution and secured to them by law, the maintenance of diocesan institutions, the formation of convocation on a broader basis and with a fuller representation of the parochial clergy,* and the reconstitution of the tribunal of last appeal in matters spiritual. These measures formed a church policy, temperate, practical, yet perfectly efficient; and if carried out, would

* "It is not necessary now, nor would it be convenient to enter into details on the subject. But I would just intimate that if the two provinces were united, the basis would be much broader; and at this moment, in the province of York, the parochial clergy are more fully represented than in the province of Canterbury. There is something, I think, ridiculous in the diocese of London, for example, with 1000 clergy, being only represented in convocation by two parochial clergymen."

cause the church to occupy a position of just influence and salutary power, which she had not for a long time filled.

"Well, my lord," proceeded Mr. Disraeli, "I had hoped that when I should have the honour of addressing you again on matters connected with these societies, I should have had to congratulate ourselves that the inconsistency, and timidity, and perplexity which have paralyzed the efforts of churchmen for so many years had entirely disappeared. I did think that cordial co-operation might have been obtained from all classes of churchmen after the significant manner in which the country has decided that no disunion between church and state should take place, but that the old constitution was, in its opinion, consistent with the fulfilment of the principle of religious liberty. I thought we might then have forgotten all our differences, and that we in this hearty and united spirit might have laboured with perseverance, with temper, with no anxiety for precipitate success, but with the determination of men who clearly see a practical object before them, for the attainment of the measures which I have noticed to-day, and which, as I have stated, form in my mind a complete church policy. But I am sorry to say I still find, at least in that part of the diocese with which I am particularly connected, difficulties existing, and, though they are different from those we have encountered before, paralyzing to a great degree the efforts which would be made for the support of the diocesan societies, and especially that which has called us together to-day. We are now told that the church is in a very difficult position—that its condition is not satisfactory; and these are made the arguments, and, no doubt, the conscientious grounds, for keeping aloof from associations like the present. But then I observe, in contrast with the difficulties which we had to encounter three or four years ago, that the nature of the difficulty is now very different. In old days, during the period of transition which I have sketched, the

church was accused of apathy, of having no hold on the feelings of the great mass of the population, of exercising little influence, and its fall was predicted in consequence. But the case is now changed. No one now accuses the church of apathy, no one now accuses the church of not possessing influence, of wanting intelligence; but it is still doomed; the church must still fall; it is still in as great danger as ever; and that danger comes not from an anti-church party, but from its own intestine condition, and the parties that exist in its own bosom.

"My lord, I am not here to deny or to regret the existence of parties in the church. Parties in the church have always existed. They existed in the church at Jerusalem. They existed in the church at Ephesus. They existed always in the church at Rome. And it would be most wonderful indeed if in a country like England, where party has always been recognized as the most efficient and satisfactory means of conducting public affairs, party should not be found in the church alone. My Lord, what is party? Party is organized opinion. And so long as the nature of man is of that various and varying character which we all know it is, so long will there be various and varying modes by which it will express itself, or by which it may be counselled, upon religious matters. There are some who find solace in symbolic ceremonies, and who feel that the religious sentiment can only be adequately satisfied by ecclesiastical services in that vein. There are others with whom the soul requires to be sustained by the ecstasy of spiritual enthusiasm. But so long as they who counsel or pursue these modes meet on the common platform of true church principles—and I hold that the acknowledgment of the church as the sacred depository of divine truth is the truest church principle—I do not think that such courses are to be regretted, but on the whole I have no doubt both schools of religious feeling have been beneficially and equally advantageous to the country and the church. And doubt-

less the two great parties in the church have effected as eminent service for true religion as the two great parties in the state have achieved for public liberty and the good government of the country.

"But there is yet another party," continued Mr. Disraeli, alluding to the Rationalists (the work entitled "Essays and Reviews," and the criticisms of Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch, then exciting much attention), "to which I must for a moment refer, because no doubt the influence of that party upon that cordial co-operation of churchmen by which alone these societies can be effectually supported is considerable, and I cannot pretend that it is advantageous. Now, that is a party described by an epithet which I observe a distinguished prelate of the church has adopted in a recent address to his clergy, but which appears to me to be an epithet that I should not use within these walls, for it is hardly as yet entered into the category of classical expression. It is an epithet, my lord, that would imply a particular degree of comprehension. But whilst fully acknowledging the abilities, the eloquence, and the knowledge of this new church party, I must say that there is a peculiarity about the comprehension which they attempt to accomplish. Hitherto there has been nothing new in a church party aiming at the comprehensive; but then they have always wished to include all those who believed anything; whereas the remarkable peculiarity of the comprehension of the party to which I now refer is, that they seem to wish to include everybody who believes nothing. Now there is no doubt that the influence of the new party is very injurious to the society whose interests have called us together to-day; and if we attempt to get rid of the difficulty by avoiding to speak about it, we in fact do not remedy our position, but the deleterious process from which we are suffering goes on without any effort on our part to oppose its evil consequences. The church having, as I think, successfully encountered the unsatisfactory condition of mind among church-

men which was the consequence, and the long consequence, of the change in the constitution; having overcome that difficulty, and churchmen having it in their power, by the measures to which I have referred, to place, by their cordial co-operation, the church in its proper position in this country, I will make a few remarks upon the new difficulty with which we have to deal—for it would be unwise to treat the existence and influence of this new party with contempt—and consider whether the difficulties which no doubt exist are insuperable, whether we must yield to them, or whether we have a prospect of overcoming them.

"Now, this new party is not founded upon the principle of authority, on which all church parties hitherto in this country, and in all countries to some degree, have been founded. But it is founded upon a very singular principle. It is founded upon the principle of criticism. Now, doubt is an element of criticism, and the tendency of criticism is necessarily sceptical. I use the epithet in a philosophical, and not in a popular or odious sense. It is quite possible, for example, that a party founded upon the principle of criticism may arrive at conclusions which we may deem monstrous. They may, for example, reject inspiration as a principle and miracles as a practice. That is possible. And I think it quite logical that, having arrived at such conclusions, they should repudiate creeds and reject articles of faith, because creeds and articles of faith cannot exist or be sustained without acknowledging the principle of inspiration and the practice of miracles. All that I admit; but what I do not understand, and what I wish to draw the attention of this assembly and of this country generally to is this—that, *having arrived at these conclusions, having arrived conscientiously at the result that, with their opinions, they must repudiate creeds and reject articles, they should not carry their principles to their legitimate end, but that, repudiating creeds and rejecting articles, they are still sworn*

*supporters of ecclesiastical establishments—
servent upholders of dignitaries of the church
—even of rectors, vicars, and curates.*

"Now this is a matter of most serious importance, not merely for us to consider as churchmen, but for the country generally to consider, whatever may be its opinions or forms of faith—for the consequences may be very critical. If it be true, as I am often told it is, that the age of faith has passed, then the fact of having an opulent hierarchy, supported by men of high cultivation, brilliant talents and eloquence, and perhaps some ambition, with no distinctive opinions, might be a very harmless state of affairs, and it would certainly not be a very permanent one. But then, my lord, instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, when I observe what is passing around us—what is taking place in this country, and not only in this country, but in other countries, and even hemispheres—instead of believing that the age of faith has passed, I hold that the characteristic of the present age is a craving credulity. Why, my lord, man is a being born to believe. And if no church comes forward with its title-deeds of truth, sustained by the tradition of sacred ages and by the conviction of countless generations to guide him, he will find altars and idols in his own heart and his own imagination. But observe this. What must be the relations of a powerful church, without distinctive creeds, with a being of such a nature? Why, of course, the chief principle of political economy will be observed. Where there is a great demand there will be a proportionate supply; and commencing, as the new school may, by rejecting the principle of inspiration, it will end by every priest becoming a prophet; and beginning as they do by repudiating the practice of miracles, before long, rest assured, we shall be living in a flitting scene of spiritual phantasmagoria. There are no tenets however extravagant, and no practices however objectionable, which will not in time develop, under such a state of affairs, opinions

the most absurd, and ceremonies the most revolting—

———Qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colat"—

perhaps to be followed by the incantations of Canidia and the Corybantian howl.

"But consider the country in which all this may take place. Dangerous in all countries, it would be yet more dangerous in England. Our empire is now unrivalled for its extent; but the base—the material base—of that empire is by no means equal to the colossal superstructure. It is not our iron ships; it is not our celebrated regiments; it is not these things which have created, or indeed really maintain our empire. It is the character of the people. Now I want to know where that famous character of the English people will be if they are to be influenced and guided by a church of immense talent, opulence, and power without any distinctive creed. You have in this country accumulated wealth that never has been equalled, and probably it will still increase. You have a luxury that will some day peradventure rival even your wealth. And the union of such circumstances with a church without a distinctive creed will lead, I believe, to dissoluteness of manners and of morals rarely equalled in the history of man, but which prepares the tomb of empires.

"There is another point in connection with this subject which I cannot help noticing on the present occasion. It is the common cry—the common blunder—that articles of faith and religious creeds are the arms of a clergy, and are framed to tyrannize over a land. They are exactly the reverse. The precise creed and the strict article are the title-deeds of the laity to the religion which has descended to them. And whenever these questions have been brought before Parliament, I have always opposed alterations of articles and subscriptions on this broad principle—that *the security and certainty which they furnish are the special privileges of the laity, and that you cannot tell in what position*

the laity may find themselves, if that security be withdrawn. Perhaps I ought to apologize for having touched upon this subject; but it appears to me—I know it from my own experience—to be one vitally connected with the affairs that have called us here to-day, because the opinions of the new school are paralyzing the efforts of many who ought to be our friends. Let us venture to ask ourselves this question:—Will these opinions succeed? Is there a possibility of their success? My conviction is that they will fail. I wish to do justice to the acknowledged talents, the influence, and information which the new party command; but I am of opinion they will fail—for two reasons. In the first place, having examined all their writings, I believe without any exception—whether they consist of fascinating eloquence, diversified learning, and picturesque sensibility (I speak seriously what I feel), and that too exercised by one honoured in this university, and whom to know is to admire and regard; or whether you find them in the cruder conclusions of prelates who appear to have commenced their theological studies after they had grasped the crozier, and who introduce to society their obsolete discoveries with the startling wonder and the frank ingenuousness of their own savages; or whether I read the lucubrations of nebulous professors, who seem in their style to have revived chaos; or lastly, whether it be the provincial arrogance and the precipitate self-complacency which flash and flare in an essay or review—I find that the common characteristic of their writings is this, that their learning is always second-hand.*

"I do not say that because learning is second-hand it may not be sound, or that knowledge, because it is second-hand, may not be true; but this I do say, without any fear of denial from any man competent to give an opinion upon the subject, that there is something in original research so invigor-

ating to the intellect, and which so braces and disciplines the human mind, that those who have undergone that process arrive at their conclusions with great caution and with great circumspection. But when a man of brilliant imagination has to deal with a vast quantity of facts furnished by the labours of others, he is tempted to generalize with a fatal facility, and often arrives at conclusions which in time he has not only to repudiate, but which sometimes he is destined to refute.

"In the second place, when I examine the writings of those who have been the masters of the new school in this learning—men who undoubtedly have gone through the process of original research, and have not found their equals for learning and perseverance and erudite assiduity for many generations, the great scholars of Germany—I find this in their labours: doing full justice to their eminent qualities, I find this in their labours, that there is really nothing new. I admit their distinguished qualities. As Hebraists they are equal to the great scholars of the eighteenth, and who flourished at the end of the seventeenth century. In their knowledge of the cognate Semitic dialects they are infinitely superior. In the new theory or science of language, as it is justly called, they have of course an advantage over the old scholars, because it is a science that has only been developed in our own time. But this I do say, that in all important conclusions, from the alleged materials of the book of Genesis down to the formation of the Canon, and in every important event, historical, literary, and spiritual, that occurred in that long interval, they have been anticipated by the great Hebrew scholars who flourished in the eighteenth and at the end of the seventeenth century. †

"I know it may be said that the suggestions of an Astruc and the investigations of a Father Simon were known only to those who, like them, lived in their cells and col-

* If the Biblical Studies of Heinrich von Ewald had never appeared, what would have become of the criticism and conclusions of our "Broad Church" divines?

† "What are all the schoolmen, Aquinas himself, to Maimonides? And as for modern philosophy, all springs from Spinoza."—*Coningsby*.

leges; but this is a vulgar and delusive error. The learned labours of those men formed the mind and inspired the efforts of the two most intellectual bodies of men that have existed certainly since the Greek philosophers—for I think they were superior to the schoolmen—the freethinkers of England and the philosophers of France. Therefore the conclusions of these eminent scholars were thoroughly placed before the public mind. All that inexorable logic, irresistible rhetoric, bewildering wit, could avail to popularize those views were set in motion to impress the new learning on the minds of the two leading nations of Europe—the people of England and the people of France. And they produced their effect. The greatest of revolutions was, I will not say, occasioned by those opinions; but no one can deny that their promulgation largely contributed to that mighty movement popularly called the French Revolution, which has not yet ended, and which is certainly the greatest event that has happened in the history of man. Only the fall of the Roman empire can be compared to it; but that was going on for centuries, and so gradually, that it cannot for one moment be held to have so instantaneously influenced the opinion of the world. Now, what happened? Look at the age in which we live, and the time when these opinions were successfully promulgated by men who, I am sure, with no intention to disparage the new party, I may venture to say were not unequal to them. Look at the Europe of the present day and the Europe of a century ago. It is not the same Europe. Its very form is changed. Whole nations and great nations, which then flourished, have disappeared. There is not a political constitution in Europe existing at the present time which then existed. The leading community of the continent of Europe has changed all its landmarks, altered its boundaries, erased its local names. The whole jurisprudence of Europe has been subverted. Even the tenure of land, which of all human institutions most affects the character of man, has been

altered. The feudal system has been abolished. Not merely laws have been changed—not merely manners have been changed—but customs have been changed. And what happened? When the turbulence was over—when the shout of triumph and the wail of agony were alike stilled—when, as it were, the waters had subsided, the sacred heights of Sinai and of Calvary were again revealed, and amid the wreck of thrones and tribunals, of extinct nations and abolished laws, mankind, tried by so many sorrows, purified by so much suffering, and wise with such unprecedented experience, bowed again before the divine truths that Omnipotence in His ineffable wisdom had intrusted to the custody and the promulgation of a chosen people!

“Well then, because all their learning is second-hand; because their conclusions are not new; because they have already been placed before the mind of man with a power and a spirit that it is vain to expect will be again equalled; because mankind have tried and rejected this new learning now bolstered up for our edification; I believe that the efforts of this new school, powerful as they are and influential at this moment, and most injurious to these diocesan societies, will fail.

“Before sitting down, there is only one other point on which I will venture briefly to touch. We are told every day that all I have feebly expressed to you may be true; but at the same time there is a characteristic of the present age which never existed in preceding ages, and which must be destructive to the church and to all religious establishments, and that is, the progress of science. The discoveries of science are not, we are told, consistent with the teachings of the church. Now I am sure there is not one in this theatre who is not prepared to do full justice to the merits of scientific men, and who does not fully appreciate those discoveries of science which have added so much to the convenience of life and to the comfort of man. But it is of great importance, when this tattle about science is mentioned, that we should annex to the

phrase precise ideas. I hold that the function of science is the interpretation of nature—and the interpretation of the highest nature is the highest science. What is the highest nature? Man is the highest nature. But I must say that when I compare the interpretation of the highest nature by the most advanced, the most fashionable and modish school of modern science, with some other teachings with which we are familiar, I am not prepared to say that the lecture-room is more scientific than the church. What is the question now placed before society with a glib assurance the most astounding? The question is this—Is man an ape or an angel?*

"My lord, *I am on the side of the angels*. I repudiate with indignation and abhorrence the contrary view, which is, I believe, foreign to the conscience of humanity: more than that, even in the strictest intel-

* The theory of evolution had never any attractions for Mr. Disraeli. In *Tancred* he thus deliciously makes a young blue-stocking describe the new doctrine:—"But what is most interesting is the way in which man has been developed. You know, all is development. The principle is perpetually going on. First, there was nothing; then there was something; then—I forget the next—I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came. Let me see—did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last. And the next change, then, will be something very superior to us—something with wings. Ah! that's it; we were fishes, and I believe we shall be crows."

lectual point of view, I believe the severest metaphysical analysis is opposed to such a conclusion. But, on the other hand, what does the church teach us? What is its interpretation of this highest nature? It teaches us that man is made in the image of his Creator—a source of inspiration and of solace—a source from which only can flow every right principle of morals and every divine truth. I say, therefore, that when we are told that the teachings of the church are not consistent with the discoveries of science, and that in that sense the inferiority of the church is shown, I totally deny the proposition. I say that the scientific teaching of the church upon the most important of all subjects is, in fact, infinitely superior to anything that has been brought forward by any of those new discoveries. In fact, it is between those two contending interpretations of the nature of man, and their consequences, that society will have to decide. Their rivalry is at the bottom of all human affairs. Upon our acceptance of that divine interpretation for which we are indebted to the church, and of which the church is the guardian, all sound and salutary legislation depends. That truth is the only security for civilization, and the only guarantee of real progress."

CHAPTER XXI.

A MORIBUND PARLIAMENT.

AT the opening of parliament—a parliament which had reached its last session—there was little to excite or depress the national mind. On all sides quiet and monotony reigned supreme. With the exception of a little contest with the Maoris in New Zealand and a dispute with Japan, England was in the enjoyment of perfect peace. Trade was flourishing and the revenue buoyant. The cotton famine no longer prostrated the industry of Lancashire, and there were evident signs that the business in the manufacturing districts of that county was reviving. The harvest of the preceding year had been abundant, and had consequently tended to mitigate the pauperism of the country. The civil war in America still continued, but it was plain that the Southern States were losing heart and that their powers of resistance were being rapidly exhausted. Denmark had come to the conclusion that it was useless to kick any longer against the pricks and had made peace with her foes, preferring to be deprived of her duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg, rather than to continue fighting against such unequal odds. The British North-American provinces had resolved to enter into a Federal union under the supremacy of the British crown, and were busy preparing their

scheme of amalgamation. A treaty had been concluded between France and Italy, by which France agreed to evacuate Rome, and Italy arranged to transfer the seat of government to Florence. All these matters were perfectly well known; and therefore, in the speech from the throne delivered by the lord chancellor, February 7, 1865, on the occasion of the legislature meeting for the despatch of business, there was little information that the public mind had not already discounted.

The country was informed that “the negotiations in which the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were engaged with the King of Denmark were brought to a conclusion by a treaty of peace; and the communications which Her Majesty receives from foreign powers lead her to entertain a well-founded hope that no renewed disturbance of the peace of Europe is to be apprehended.” Then allusion was made to the civil war in America, and to the resolve of England to remain “steadfastly neutral between the contending parties;” to the dispute with Japan; and to the “little war” in New Zealand. The desire of the North-American provinces to enter into Federal union was approved of, and would be fully considered.* The work of the session was foreshadowed; “various

* Resolutions were passed (Oct. 10, 1864) at a conference of delegates from Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward's Island, held at Quebec, respecting the scheme of a Federal union of those provinces and colonies, under the supremacy of the British crown. On that occasion it was resolved:—That the best interests and present and future prosperity of British North America will be promoted by a Federal union under the crown of Great Britain, provided such union can be effected on principles just to the several provinces. That in the Federation of the British North-American provinces, the system of government best adapted under existing circumstances to protect the diversified interests of the several provinces, and secure efficiency, harmony, and permanency in the working of the Union, would be a general government charged with matters

of common interest to the whole country, and local governments for each of the Canadas, and for the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, charged with the control of local matters in their respective sections; provision being made for admission into the Union, on equitable terms, of Newfoundland, the North-west Territory, British Columbia, and Vancouver. That in framing a constitution for the general government, the conference, with a view to the perpetuation of our connection with the mother country, and to the promotion of the best interests of the people of these provinces, desire to follow the model of the British constitution so far as our circumstances will permit. That the executive authority or government shall be vested in the Sovereign of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and be administered, according to the well-

measures of public usefulness will be submitted for your consideration ;" the courts of law and equity were to be removed to "a convenient site;" and bills relating to the revision of the statute law, to patents for inventions, to the relief of the poor, and to educational matters were to be discussed and to become law. Such was the ministerial programme, which was certainly neither an alarming nor an exciting document. "The speech from the throne," said Lord Derby, "is one of just such a character as might naturally have been expected to be addressed by an aged minister to a moribund parliament. The days of the parliament are numbered. No medical skill or science can prolong its existence beyond a period of a very few weeks. Its condition, as far as the protraction of its life is concerned, is absolutely hopeless. All that the most eminent physicians can do for it is to take care that its dying moments are disturbed by no unnecessary excitement, that no distracting influences may disquiet its last hours or interfere with the peace of its fleeting moments, and that it may be supplied with just so much gentle occupation as may tranquilly engage its thoughts. The physicians will, of course, continue to the last to hold their formal consultations on the state of the patient, receive their accustomed fees, and waft it serenely towards its final rest." In the debate on the address Mr. Disraeli, for

the first time for many sessions, took no part.

One important subject had been omitted from the speech from the throne, which might have been included. During the past few months the condition of Canada had been a source of alarm to many in the mother country. It was feared that if the North wished to vent its spite against England, whose sympathies throughout the civil war had been so manifestly enlisted on the side of the Southerners, and assume the aggressive, the defenceless position of Canada would offer an easy prey to the American arms. Already it had been thought by the more timorous, that the United States were exhibiting signs of a feeling hostile to England. Shortly before the meeting of parliament, President Lincoln had given formal notice to our Minister of his intention to terminate the convention under which England and the United States had mutually agreed not to fit out naval armaments upon the Canadian lakes. At the same time it was also hinted at Washington that the treaty of commerce between the United States and the North-American provinces might come to an end. These proposals caused no little alarm; and though the government of Lord Palmerston did not participate in the anxiety of the country, still ministers thought it prudent not to completely ignore the possible dangers of the situation. Accordingly a

understood principles of the British constitution, by the sovereign personally, or by representative duly authorized. That the sovereign, or representative of the sovereign, shall be commander-in-chief of the land and naval militia forces. That there shall be a general legislature for the federated provinces, composed of a Legislative Council and House of Commons. That for the purpose of forming the Legislative Council, the federated provinces shall be considered as consisting of three divisions:—1st, Upper Canada; 2nd, Lower Canada; 3rd, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island, with equal representation in the Legislative Council. That Upper Canada be represented in the Legislative Council by 24 members, Lower Canada by 24 members, and the maritime provinces by 24 members, of which Nova Scotia shall have ten, New Brunswick ten, and Prince Edward's Island four members. That the colony of Newfoundland shall be entitled to enter the proposed Union, with a representation in the Legislative Council of four members. The North-west Territory, British Columbia, and Vancouver shall be admitted into the Union on such terms and conditions as parliament shall deem equitable, and as shall receive the assent of Her Majesty; and, in the case of

the province of British Columbia or Vancouver, as shall be agreed to by the legislature of such province. The general government and legislature shall have all powers necessary or proper for performing the obligations of the province, as part of the British empire, to foreign countries, arising under treaties between Great Britain and such countries. The local government and legislature of each province shall be constructed in such manner as the existing legislature of such province shall provide in the Act consenting to the Union. That in regard to all subjects over which jurisdiction belongs to both the general and the local governments, the laws of the Federal parliament shall control and supersede those made by the local legislature, and the latter shall be void so far as they are repugnant to or inconsistent with the former. That both the English and French languages may be employed in the general legislature and in its proceedings, and also in the local legislature of Lower Canada, and in the Federal and local courts of Lower Canada. The Confederation shall assume all the debts and liabilities of each province. All engagements that may be entered into with the Imperial government for the defence of the country shall be assumed by the Confederation.

distinguished officer of Engineers, Colonel Jervois — now Sir William Jervois, the governor of South Australia — was instructed to report upon the defences of Canada, and to ascertain how far such fortifications could protect the frontier from invasion, and at what expense they could be placed in a more invulnerable condition. Colonel Jervois carried out his instructions with despatch, and the result of his investigations was at once made public. As soon as his report appeared it was carefully perused, and became the subject of a debate in both Houses of parliament. In the opinion of Col. Jervois the Canadian frontier was utterly defenceless to resist invasion, and accordingly the government immediately took steps to strengthen the colony. Sums were asked from parliament to be expended upon the defence of Quebec, whilst the Canadian government were to erect fortifications at Montreal.

The attention of the House of Commons was called to the question by Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald. He acquitted the government of the United States and the more educated portion of their people of any feeling of hostility towards England; but it would be worse than madness, he said, not to perceive what might happen under certain circumstances. Canada was unprotected; and it was now a question, according to Colonel Jervois, whether we should withdraw the British force from the colony so as to save our troops from defeat, or increase them to such strength as would constitute an effective defence. To call home our forces would be humiliating and disastrous; therefore he suggested that measures for effective defence should at once be taken. Mr. Cardwell, the secretary for the colonies, replied that earthworks were being raised at Quebec and Montreal; and though the relations between England and the United States were at present perfectly friendly, the government was perfectly alive to the dangers that might arise. If the time ever came, he remarked amid the cheers of the House, that Canada should be at war, war

with Canada would also signify war with England.

To him succeeded Mr. Disraeli (March 13, 1865). He supported the government. "I am not here to-night," he said, "to impute, and I have never imputed anything against the conduct of the government of the United States throughout this great struggle;* but on the contrary, I am now prepared after further experience to repeat what I said two years ago, that, under circumstances of almost unprecedented difficulty, that government has conducted itself with great energy and discretion. I am not of opinion that, in the event of the termination of the American war, we should be placed in any immediate danger of coming into collision with that government owing to our connection with Canada. I do not pretend now to express any opinion as to what may be the termination of the present contest, as it appears to me to be quite foreign to the question under discussion; but, even assuming that the result may be such as is anticipated by the hon. member for Bradford [Mr. W. E. Forster, who predicted that the North would be victorious], I do not believe that the citizens of the United States of the North, even if entirely and completely victorious, will feel inclined to enter immediately into another struggle with a power not inferior in determination and in resources to the Southern states of America. I form that opinion, because I believe that the people of the United States are eminently a sagacious people. I don't

* Praise from an adversary is seldom undeserved. In the course of the debate, Mr. Bright compared the reticent and statesmanlike conduct of Mr. Disraeli throughout the civil war with the hasty and passionate expressions of sympathy with the South which had often been indulged in by certain members of the Conservative party. "Now," said the member for Birmingham, "if I were to give advice to the hon. gentlemen opposite it would be this—for while stating that during the last four years many noble lords in the other House have said foolish things, I think I should be uncan-did if I did not say that you also have said foolish things—learn from the example set you by the right hon. gentleman. He [Mr. Disraeli], with a thoughtfulness and statesmanship which you do not all acknowledge, did not say a word from that bench likely to create difficulty with the United States. I think his chief and his followers might learn something from his example."

think they are insensible to the glory of great dominion and extended empire, and I give them equally credit for being influenced by passions which actuate mankind, and particularly nations which enjoy such freedom as they do. But they are a sagacious people, and I don't think they would seize the moment of exhaustion as being the most favourable for the prosecution of an enterprise which would require great resources and great exertions.

"There are other reasons which also induce me to dispute that opinion. I have not been influenced in forming my judgment upon points of such vast importance by that sort of rowdy rhetoric which has been expressed at public meetings and in certain journals in America, and upon which some people in this country found their conclusions as to the possible character and opinions of the American people. I look upon these expressions of opinion as I should look upon those strange and fantastic drinks of which we hear so much, and which are such favourites on the other side of the Atlantic; and I should as soon suppose this rowdy rhetoric was the expression of the real feelings of the American people as that these potations formed the aliment and nutriment of their bodies. There is another reason why this violent course will not be adopted. The democracy of America must not be confounded with the democracy of the Old World. It is not formed of the scum of turbulent cities, neither is it merely a section of an exhausted middle-class, which speculates in stocks, and calls that progress. It is a territorial democracy. Aristotle, who has taught us most of the wise things we know, never said a wiser one than this—that the cultivators of the soil are the least inclined to sedition and to violent courses. Now, being a territorial democracy, their character has been formed and influenced in a manner by the property with which they are connected, and by the pursuits they follow; and a sense of responsibility arising from the reality of their possessions may much

influence their political conduct. And I believe they are very much more inclined to welcome the returning labourers to their fields, to see around them the products of the earth, and to behold happiness in those households to which they are so much attached, than to plunge into the miseries of a new and terrible war.

"But although these are my opinions generally, I cannot conceal from myself that very great changes have taken place in America of late years; and these changes I have reason to believe are not regarded in this House with sufficient seriousness, while in my opinion they amount to no less than a revolution. I will ask hon. members to recall to themselves the state of North America when we met in this House four years ago. That portion of the world was then divided among what we may call three great powers—first, the United States of America; secondly, Canada, and the settlements and dependencies belonging to our own sovereign; and thirdly, Mexico, a country which certainly did not possess much political power, but which in extent, resources, fertility of soil, and mineral wealth, was almost unequalled in the world. In every one of these three divisions there have been immense changes. In the United States a civil war has raged for four years, and even if that war should terminate as the hon. member for Bradford suggests, I cannot believe that we shall see the same society and form of government established—or even if the form be the same, certainly the spirit will be altered—as existed before the civil war commenced. We must recollect that even if the Federal government should be triumphant, it will have to deal with most perplexing questions and with a discontented population. I need not dwell much upon the then state of the Southern community, but the slave population will then be no longer slaves; there will be several millions of another race emancipated and invested with all the rights of freemen, and, so far as the letter of

the law is concerned, they will be upon an equality with the Saxon race, with whom they can possibly have no sympathy. We know from experience and practice that there is a difference between those who are recently emancipated and that—I will not call it a superior race, because that might offend hon. gentlemen opposite; nor will I call it an inferior race, but a race that is not identical with the other—nothing tends more to the discontent of a people than that they should be in possession of privileges and rights which practically are not recognized, and which they do not enjoy.

“These are the elements of political discontent, and it is possible that when this war is over the American government may have to deal with great masses of discontented population. To do this successfully you must have a strong government. What does that mean? Why, you must have a centralizing government; and the American government have found it necessary to have recourse to the centralizing principle during these events. The government must have an army at its command, in order to maintain the order and unity that it is bound to uphold. These are the elements that cannot fail to produce great difficulties in the United States, even if they come triumphant out of the struggle in which they are engaged. But what is the position of the colonies and dependencies of Her Majesty in that country? Four years ago, when this struggle broke out, there was very little in common between them. The tie that bound them to this country was almost one of formality; but what has been the consequence of this great change in North America? You have now a powerful federation, with the element of nationality strongly evinced in it; they count their population by millions, and they are conscious that they have a district more fertile and an extent of territory equal to the unappropriated reserves of the United States. These are the elements and prognostics of new influences that have changed the character of that country. Nor is it

without reason that they do not feel less of the ambition which characterizes new communities than the United States, and that they may become, we will say, the Russia of the New World. Well, what is also the condition of Mexico? Four years ago, when this war broke out, Mexico was a republic with a weak government. It is now an empire, and it has become so by the interposition of two of the most ancient states of Europe—France and Austria.* When we see all these immense changes it is impossible to deny that in North America a great revolution is occurring, and that when this struggle is over, when peace reappears and tranquillity is re-established, you will find these communities governed by very different influences, and aiming at very different objects.

“I have often heard statesmen, and distinguished statesmen, mumbling over the balance of power in Europe. It has appeared to me always to be a great mistake, when we look to the distribution of power, to confine our views to Europe, because we shall find, and perhaps speedily find, that there are other influences in other quarters of the globe which will interfere to disturb our calculations. It seems to me that this war in America has rapidly precipitated the change. It shows us that the proper meaning of ‘balance of power’ is security for communities in general against a predominant and particular power, and that you have to take into your consideration states and influences that are not to be counted among the European powers. It is impossible, notwithstanding what hon. gentlemen may say about the character of the United States, to conceal that there is a feeling among those influential landowners to whom the hon. gentleman the member for Bradford referred, with regard to Europe of a peculiar character. I will not say that they look to old Europe with feelings of jealousy or

* The Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria received (April 10, 1864) a Mexican deputation at Miramar, and consented to accept the imperial dignity under the title of Maximilian I., emperor of Mexico.

vindictiveness, because epithets and words of that kind ought not to be unnecessarily used with respect to the relations between nations; but it is undeniable that the United States look to old Europe with a want of sympathy. They have no sympathy with a country that is created and sustained by tradition; and the only country to which they look with sympathy is that part of old Europe which is new. I have always observed this in their conduct. It is quite clear, then, it is impossible to know what relations may exist between the United States, this country, and Her Majesty's dependencies on the other side of the Atlantic. Taking these larger views, then, we ought to consider that, not to-morrow or next year, but now we are on the eve of events of very great importance. The question we have to ask ourselves is, Is this country prepared to renounce her American dependencies and colonies, or are we to retain that tie? Now, if these colonies expressed a wish to separate the connection, and if they preferred to be absorbed by the United States, we might terminate our connection with dignity and without disaster. But if, on the other hand, those views are just which are more generally accepted—if there should be on the part of Canada and the other North American colonies a sincere and deep desire to form a considerable state and develop its resources, and to preserve the patronage and aid of England until that mature hour when we shall lose our dependency, but gain a permanent ally and friend—then it would be the greatest political blunder that can be conceived for us to renounce, relinquish, and avoid the responsibility of maintaining our interests in Canada at the present moment.

"If, from considerations of expense, we were to quit the possessions that we now occupy in North America, it would be ultimately, as regards our resources and wealth, as fatal and disastrous a step as could possibly be taken.

Our prosperity would not long remain a consolation to us, and we might then prepare for the invasion of our country and the subjugation of the people. I infer that hon. gentlemen opposite do not express these views, which have, however, found utterance in other quarters; but that they take a truly patriotic and English view of this subject—namely, not to force our connection on any dependency; but if, at a moment of revolution in North America, we find our colonies asserting the principle of their nationality, and if, foreseeing a glorious future, we find them still depending on the faithful and affectionate assistance of England, it would be the most short-sighted and suicidal policy to shrink from the duty that Providence has called upon us to fulfil. What is the course which we ought to take under these circumstances? I cannot doubt that it is our duty to place our North American colonies in a state of proper defence; and when we are told that you cannot defend a frontier of 1500 miles, I ask who has ever required you to defend a frontier of 1500 miles? What we recommend and require—I do not speak of this side of the House, but of those generally who hold these views—is to see that our troops in Canada are not placed in a position in which the utmost bravery and skill are of no avail, but that they should defend that country according to military practice. Austria does not attempt to defend the whole of her frontier; but she provides a good army, and takes care that when her territory is invaded there shall be points round which her troops may rally, and which they may occupy against superior strength. We wish to see Canada placed in such a condition that if she has to be defended by her countrymen, assisted by the troops of Her Majesty, they may have the fair-play the troops have a right to expect, by having fortifications constructed with sufficient skill to double the number of her army, and insure the success of a campaign.

"That is what we trust Her Majesty's

ministers have determined to do. I think that these four years need not have been lost, and that from the first the affairs of North America have not been considered of the importance to which they have now attained, and which from the first I have felt they must attain. I do not wish to employ taunts, but I form that opinion from judgments which have been expressed by members of Her Majesty's government during the last four years. Those judgments upon the struggle in America and its probable consequences have been for the most part inconsistent. One day we were told by an eminent member of the government that the South might be said to have completed her independence, and speeches have been made which led all England to suppose that a diplomatic recognition of the Southern States was to be expected. Very shortly afterwards another great authority, now lost to this House, and no one deplores that loss more deeply than myself—I mean the late Sir George Lewis—told us that he did not recognize the existence of a single element of political independence in the South. Well, these inconsistent opinions perplexed the country, and have shown that from the first the government have never taken that view of the situation which we had a right to expect. One day we were led to believe from the highest authority in the government, that there was on their part the utmost sympathy with those who were struggling in the Southern States; while, on the other hand, the minister whose judgment upon such matters has, of course, peculiar weight, and which was particularly watched by foreign countries, expressed opinions of a totally different character.

"Sir, I do not blame Her Majesty's government because, in a position of extreme difficulty, they have made mistakes and formed opinions inconsistent with each other; but what I do regret is the consequence of those discordant opinions on their part—namely, that all this time Her Majesty's colonies have not been defended

as we are now all agreed they should be, with the possibility of dangers hanging over them; that we have lost four years, and are now about to make an effort on a very small scale, and necessarily with very limited resources. But, sir, that is after all but a very little matter, provided we are now following a sound principle. If the parliament of England is determined to maintain our connection with the colonies of Her Majesty, founded upon an unequivocal expression of opinion on their part that to that connection they cling with feelings of a character which shows that the national sentiment is perfectly unimpaired; if they prove that the reports and rumours which have been circulated of late years respecting the feelings of the colonies are wholly unfounded, and that they themselves are resolved to maintain it until they emulate us in our great career and become our rivals as well as our allies and friends—then I shall not regret what has occurred. It appears to me that there are two consequences of public opinion being of late agitated upon this topic—that we are conscious now of what our duty to the colonies is, and that we are prepared to fulfil that duty in a manner which I doubt not will conduce to the strength and independence of the British empire."

In consequence of this debate four members of the executive council of Canada proceeded to England to confer with the government as to the arrangements necessary for the Canadian defences in the event of war with the United States. As we know, no such war took place.

The interest which this discussion excited led indirectly to a loss which both the country and the House of Commons could ill sustain. Mr. Cobden had been for some months in failing health. Towards the close of the preceding year he had aggravated a bad attack of bronchitis by addressing a large audience at Rochdale, and he had been ordered rest and change of clime. His desire, however, to take part in the debate on the Canadian fortifications, in order to

oppose the policy of the government, was too keen to be repressed, and he hastened up to London for the occasion. Immediately after his arrival he was laid prostrate by an attack of asthma. For several days he fought with death, then the asthma became congestion, and bronchitis supervened. A few hours after this complication had ensued all was over. "Many tears," writes his biographer, "were shed in homes where Cobden's name was revered and loved when the tidings that he was dead reached them." Whatever opinions may be passed upon the political views of Mr. Cobden—and in this work we have seldom had occasion to agree with them—there can be no doubt but that the once famous advocate of free trade was a great force in the state, and exercised an influence over the minds of the masses which it was impossible for the most prejudiced to ignore. The political creed of Mr. Cobden was a simple one. He held that the love of intervention in foreign politics was the great curse of our policy—an opinion which caused him cordially to dislike Lord Palmerston, and to regret that he had ever voted to turn out the government of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli. He looked upon Ireland as our severest home difficulty, and he considered that the United States was the great economical rival which would rule the destiny of England. The life of Mr. Cobden was spent in maintaining propositions opposed to the current of public opinion, and consequently the man, as a politician, was far from popular. Still all respected his noble disinterestedness, his moral courage, and the fidelity he displayed to the principles he professed. The loss which the country sustained by the death of Mr. Cobden was gracefully alluded to in the House of Commons as soon as the sad event became known.

"The two great achievements of Mr. Cobden's life," said Lord Palmerston, "were, in the first place, the abrogation of those laws which regulated the importation of corn, and the great development which that gave to the industry

of the country; and, in the second place, those commercial arrangements which he negotiated with France, and which have largely tended to improve the trade and extend the commercial intercourse of the two countries. When this last achievement was accomplished it was my lot to offer to Mr. Cobden those honours which the crown could bestow for such important services, and which were not derogatory for him to accept; but that same disinterested spirit which regulated all his private and public conduct led him to decline those honours which might most properly have recognized and acknowledged his public services. I can only say that the country has sustained a loss, and every man in it."

On behalf of the Opposition, the tribute paid by Mr. Disraeli was equally eulogistic (April 3, 1865). "Having been a member of this House," he said, "when Mr. Cobden first took his seat, and having remained in the House during the whole of his lengthened career, I cannot reconcile it to myself to be silent on this occasion, when we have to deplore the loss of one so eminent, and that, too, in the ripeness of his manhood and the full vigour of his intellect. Although it was the fortune of Mr. Cobden to enter public life at a time when passions ran high, and he himself by no means a man insensible to political excitement, still when the strife was over there was soon observed in him a moderation and a tempered thought that intimated a large intellectual horizon, and the possession of statesmanlike qualities. Though formed in the tumult of popular opinions, with which he identified himself, there was in his character a vein of reverence for tradition which, even unconsciously to himself, subdued and softened the acerbity of the cruder conclusions to which he may have arrived. That, in my mind, is a quality which in some degree must be possessed by any one who aspires to sway this country; for, notwithstanding the rapid changes in which we live, and the numerous improvements and alterations we

anticipate, this country is still old England, and the past is one of the elements of our power. Of Mr. Cobden's conduct in this House all present are aware, yet perhaps I may be permitted to say that as a debater he had few equals. As a logician he was close, complete, acute, perhaps even subtle; yet at the same time he was gifted with such a degree of imagination that he never lost sight of the sympathies of those whom he addressed; and so, generally avoiding the driving of his argument to extremities, he became as a speaker both practical and persuasive.

"The noble lord, who is far more competent than myself to deal with such subjects, has referred the House to Mr. Cobden's conduct as an administrator. It would seem that, notwithstanding his eminent position, and the various opportunities which offered for the exercise of that ambition which he might legitimately entertain, his life was destined to pass without his being afforded an occasion of showing that he possessed those qualities invaluable in the management of public affairs. Still, fortunately, it happened that before he quitted us there came to him one of the greatest opportunities ever offered to a public man, and it may be justly said that by the transaction of high affairs he obtained the consideration of the two leading countries of the world. There is something mournful in the history of this parliament, when we remember how many of our most eminent and valued colleagues have gone from among us. I cannot refer to the history of any other parliament which will bear to posterity so fatal a record. But there is this consolation when we remember these unequalled and irreparable visitations—that these great men are not altogether lost to us; that their opinions will be often quoted in this House, their authority appealed to, their judgments attested, even their very words will form part of our discussions and debates. There are, I may say, some members of parliament who, though they may not be present in the

body, are still members of this House—who are independent of dissolutions, of the caprice of constituencies, and even of the course of time. I think Mr. Cobden was one of those men. I believe that when the verdict of posterity is recorded on his life and conduct, it will be said of him that, looking to all he said and did, he was without doubt the greatest political character the pure middle class of this country has yet produced—an ornament to the House of Commons, and an honour to England."

Mr. Bright was too much moved to trust himself to deliver the speech which might have been expected of him. "I am," he said, in tones almost inaudible, "utterly unable to address the House; but the sympathy shown on all sides for my departed friend has deeply gratified me. I cannot now attempt to utter the feelings with which I am overwhelmed. At some calmer moment, when I may have the opportunity of addressing my countrymen, I will endeavour to show the lesson which I think may be learned from the life and character of my friend. I can only say that, after many years of most intimate and most brotherly friendship with him, I little knew how much I loved him until I found that I had lost him."

The House was soon to be called upon to regret the loss of another famous man, whose sudden death is among the most dramatic incidents of our time. During the performance at a theatre in Washington President Lincoln was shot through the head by one John Wilkes Booth, the son of an actor once well known in England as the rival of the great Kean. "It has become my distressing duty," wrote Mr. Stanton to the American minister in London, "to announce to you that last night his Excellency Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States, was assassinated about the hour of half-past ten o'clock, in his private box at Lord's Theatre. The president, about nine o'clock, accompanied Mrs. Lincoln to the theatre. Another lady and gentleman were within the box. About

half-past ten, during a pause in the performance, the assassin entered the box, the door of which was unguarded. He hastily approached the president from behind, discharging a pistol at his head. The bullet entered the back of his head, and penetrated nearly through. The assassin then leaped from the box on to the stage, brandishing a large knife or dagger, and exclaiming '*Sic semper tyrannis!*' and escaped in the rear of the theatre. Immediately upon the discharge the president fell to the floor insensible, and continued in that state till twenty minutes past seven this morning, when he breathed his last."

When the news of this terrible deed reached Europe it called forth the fiercest indignation, and the warmest expressions of sympathy towards the Lincoln family. The late president had few enemies, and his loss throughout the civilized world was sincerely mourned. A man of the people, he had by his industry, his high sense of honour, and talents of no mean order, risen from the humblest surroundings to the highest post in the gift of the United States. "His occupying the chair of state," said Mr. Emerson, "was a triumph of the good sense of mankind and of the public confidence. This middle-class country has got a middle-class president at last. Yes, in manners, sympathies, but not in powers, for his powers were superior. His mind mastered the problem of the day; and, as the problem grew, so did his comprehension of it. Rarely was man so fitted to the event. In the midst of fears and jealousies, in the Babel of counsels and parties, this man wrought incessantly with all his might and all his honesty, labouring to find what the people wanted, and how to obtain that. It cannot be said there is any exaggeration of his worth. If ever a man was fairly tested he was. There was no lack of resistance, nor of slander, nor of ridicule. The times have allowed no state secrets; the nation has been in such a ferment, such multitudes had to be trusted, that no secret could be kept. Every door

was ajar, and we know all that befell. Then what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war! Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado. In four years—the four years of battle-days—his endurance, his fertility of resources, his magnanimity, were sorely tried, and never found wanting. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood, an heroic figure in the centre of an heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs; the true representative of this continent; an entirely public man; father of his country, the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue."

Throughout England there were but two feelings upon the subject—abhorrence of the crime and sympathy for the widow and the country mourning so terrible a loss. With her own hand the queen—ever tender, from painful experience, of the domestic sorrows of others—wrote a letter of condolence to Mrs. Lincoln. All over the kingdom public meetings, testifying their respect for the great American statesman, were held. In both houses of parliament addresses were moved "expressing the feeling of sorrow and indignation with which the House regards the perpetration of this atrocious crime, and sympathy with the government and people of the United States, humbly praying Her Majesty, in communicating to the government of the United States her condolence in this matter, to convey at the same time an expression of deep feeling on the part of the House."

In the House of Commons it fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli (May 1, 1865) to second the motion, and he acquitted himself of his task with the usual delicacy of sentiment and good feeling which were always on these occasions so conspicuous.

"There are rare instances," he said, "when

the sympathy of a nation approaches those tenderer feelings which are generally supposed to be peculiar to the individual and to be the happy privilege of private life; and this is one. Under any circumstances we should have bewailed the catastrophe at Washington; under any circumstances we should have shuddered at the means by which it was accomplished. But in the character of the victim, and even in the accessories of his last moments, there is something so homely and innocent that it takes the question, as it were, out of all the pomp of history and the ceremonial of diplomacy—it touches the heart of nations and appeals to the domestic sentiment of mankind. Whatever the various and varying opinions in this House and in the country generally on the policy of the late President of the United States, all must agree that, in one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man, he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength. Nor is it possible for the people of England at such a moment to forget, that he sprang from the same fatherland and spoke the same mother tongue. When such crimes are perpetrated the public mind is apt to fall into gloom and perplexity, for it is ignorant alike of the causes and the consequences of such deeds. But it is one of our duties to reassure them under unreasoning panic and despondency. Assassination has never changed the history of the world. I will not refer to the remote past, though an accident has made the most memorable instance of antiquity at this moment fresh in the minds and memory of all around me. But even the costly sacrifice of a Cæsar did not propitiate the inexorable destiny of his country. If we look to modern times, to times at least with the feelings of which we are familiar, and the people of which were animated and influenced by the same interests as ourselves, the violent deaths of two heroic men, Henry IV. of France and the Prince of Orange, are conspicuous illustrations of this truth. In expressing our

unaffected and profound sympathy with the citizens of the United States on this untimely end of their elected chief, let us not therefore sanction any feeling of depression, but rather let us express a fervent hope that from out of the awful trials of the last four years, of which the least is not this violent demise, the various populations of North America may issue elevated and chastened, rich with the accumulated wisdom and strong in the disciplined energy which a young nation can only acquire in a protracted and perilous struggle. Then they will be enabled not merely to renew their career of power and prosperity, but they will renew it to contribute to the general happiness of mankind. It is with these feelings that I second the address to the crown."

Upon the debate on the budget and upon the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church Mr. Disraeli was silent.

Since the government of Lord Palmerston had abandoned the cause of reform, those ardent Liberals who declined to be a party to the desertion, and who were always prepared, session after session, to bring forward a measure which was, as Mr. Disraeli called it, to "tinker up" the constitution, were again to appear on the scene. Mr. Baines, the member for Leeds, who had identified his name with the project of lowering the rate of the elective franchise in the English boroughs, once more came forward to introduce a bill to extend the elective franchise in boroughs in England and Wales. His scheme was to extend the franchise to the occupiers of all houses of not less than six pounds in value. He gave expression to the customary objections and well-worn arguments against the existing state of things, and on the second reading of the bill an interesting debate ensued.

Lord Elcho moved the "previous question." Mr. Bernal Osborne complained that the Treasury bench had treated the question of reform in a very insincere spirit. Sir George Grey justified the government in the course they had taken in the past, and

voted for the second reading of the bill. Mr. W. E. Forster held that as education was extended so ought the suffrage to be extended. The most powerful speech on the Liberal side was, however, that delivered by Mr. Lowe—the precursor of those brilliant speeches on reform in the following year—who warmly opposed the measure. He asserted that the interests of the working classes were better represented and protected by the House of Commons as at present constituted than if the House were to be elected by the working men themselves; because in these times legislation was a complicated science, requiring men of the highest education and intelligence to put it into practice. He objected to the measure of Mr. Baines on account of its swamping tendency and democratic tone; it would cast the country loose from its only safe anchorage—the ten pounds franchise—and send her adrift upon the sea of democracy. He concluded by delivering an emphatic warning to those who sat on his side of the House. “And now I do solemnly ask the Liberal party,” he said, “to pass in review their own position with regard to this question. They have to make their choice, not merely on the fate which shall befall this particular bill, but with the full knowledge that a general election is to follow. And I ask whether it is to go forth that the party of liberality and progress in this country does or does not for the future cast in its lot and identify its fortunes with that particular form of government called democracy, which has never yet been the government of this country. It is a momentous issue which we have to try; and nothing but a sense of its enormous importance induces me to do what the House will believe is not a pleasant duty, to make my present speech in the neighbourhood in which I stand. I view this, however, as a question between progress and retrogression. So far from believing that democracy would aid the progress of the state, I am satisfied it would impede it. Its political economy is not

that of Adam Smith, and its theories widely differ from those which the intelligent and clear-headed working man would adopt, did his daily avocation give him leisure to instruct himself. It is always introducing an ungrateful subject to make personal references, but perhaps I may be allowed for a moment to quote myself. Gentlemen think it the height of illiberality on my part, and believe that I am abandoning the cause of progress, because on this occasion I refuse to follow their steps. Of course I was quite prepared for that; but nevertheless I have been a Liberal all my life. I was a Liberal at a time and in places where it was not so easy to make professions of Liberalism as in the present day, and I suffered for my Liberal principles; but I did so gladly, because I had confidence in them, and because I never had occasion to recall a single conviction which I had deliberately arrived at. I have had the great happiness to see almost everything done by the decisions of this House that I thought should be carried into effect, and I have full confidence in the progress of society to a degree incalculable to us; and by the application of sound principles that the happiness and prosperity of mankind may be still further augmented. But for the very reason that I look forward to and hope for this amelioration, I regard as one of the greatest dangers with which the country can be threatened a proposal to subvert the existing order of things, and to transfer power from the hands of property, industry, and intelligence, and to place it in the hands of men whose whole life is necessarily occupied in daily struggles for existence. I earnestly hope—and it is the object I have in view—that I may have done something to pick this question out of the slough of despond in which it has wallowed. Sir, I have been weary and sickened at the way in which this question has been dealt with. The way in which the two parties have tossed this question from one to the other reminds me of nothing so much as a young lady and

young gentleman playing at battledore and shuttlecock. After tossing the shuttlecock from one to the other a few times, they let it drop and begin to flirt. The great Liberal party may be presumed to know its own business better than I do. I venture, however, to make this prediction, that if they do unite their fortunes with the fortunes of democracy, as it is proposed they should do in the case of this measure, they will not fail in one of two things: if they fail in carrying this measure they will ruin their party, and if they succeed in carrying this measure they will ruin their country."

The leader of the Opposition also took a prominent part in the debate (May 8, 1865). Mr. Disraeli objected to the measure. He objected to it because an increase of the franchise in boroughs was a proposal to re-distribute political power in the country. He did not think that the distribution of political power in the country ought to be treated partially; from the very nature of things it was impossible, if there was to be a re-distribution of political power, that they could only regard the suffrage as it affected one section of the constituent body. Whatever the proposition of Mr. Baines—whether abstractedly it might be expedient or not—this was quite clear, that it must be considered not only in relation to the particular persons with whom it would deal, but in relation to other persons with whom it did not deal, though it would affect them. And, therefore, it had always been clear that if they dealt with the subject popularly called parliamentary reform they must deal with it, as he had often stated, comprehensively. The arrangements they might make with reference to one part of the constituency might not be objectionable in themselves, but might be extremely objectionable if they considered them with relation to other parts. Consequently, it had been held—and the more they considered the subject the more true and just appeared to be the conclusion—that if they dealt with the matter

they must deal with it as a whole. He then repeated the arguments he had before brought forward.

"Sir," he said, "the distribution of seats, as any one must know who has ever considered the subject deeply and with a sense of responsibility towards the country, is one of the most profound and difficult questions that can be brought before the House. It is all very well to treat it in an easy off-hand manner; but how are you to reconcile the case of North Gloucester, of North Durham, of West Kent, and many other counties, where you find a few towns, with an aggregate population, perhaps, of 100,000, returning six members to this House, while the rest of the population of the county, though equal in amount, returns only two members? How are you to meet the case of the West Riding in reference to its boroughs, or the case of the representation of South Lancashire in reference to its boroughs? Why, those are more anomalous than the case of Calne. Then there is the question of Scotland. With a population hardly equal to that of the metropolis, and with wealth greatly inferior—probably not more than two-thirds of the amount—Scotland yet possesses forty-eight members, while the metropolis has only twenty. Do you reformers mean to say that you are prepared to disfranchise Scotland in proportion to the population, or that you are going to develop the representation of the metropolis in proportion to its population and property, and so allow a country like England, so devoted to local government and so influenced by local feeling, to be governed by London? And therefore, when those speeches are made which gain a cheer for the moment, and are supposed to be so unanswerable as arguments in favour of parliamentary change, I would recommend the House to recollect that this as a question is one of the most difficult and one of the deepest that can possibly engage the attention of the country. The fact is, in the representation of this country other elements enter besides

merely population and property—you have to take care that the country itself is represented. That is one reason why I am opposed to the second reading of the bill—because it deals partially with the subject, and not completely and comprehensively.”

Mr. Disraeli objected also to the bill because it was brought forward by a private member; such a measure should only be introduced by the government. He denied that the question of reform had been trifled with either by Liberal or Conservative premiers in the past, as had been alleged. Then he dealt with the statement of Sir George Grey that it was only in 1860 that the portentous truth flashed across the mind of the country that the question of parliamentary reform was this—was it possible to admit a portion of the working classes to the enjoyment of the franchise without impairing the constitution of the country? Such was not the case. That was the question, and the only question, which had engaged the attention of Lord Derby's cabinet in 1858. The question was, whether they could secure the franchise for a certain portion of the working classes who, by their industry, their intelligence, and their integrity, showed that they were worthy of such a possession, without at the same time overwhelming the rest of the constituency by the numbers of those whom they admitted. That was the only question which occupied the attention of the government of Lord Derby; and yet Sir George Grey had declared that it was only in 1860 that the attention of the public was first called to the subject, when, in fact, the question of parliamentary reform had been before them for more than ten years, and on a greater scale than that embraced by the measure under consideration that evening!

“I need not remind the House,” continued Mr. Disraeli, “of the reception which Lord Derby's bill encountered. It is neither my disposition nor, I am sure, that of any of my colleagues, to complain of the votes of this House on that occasion,

nor to indulge in reproaches against any of its members. Political life must be taken as you find it, and so far as I am concerned not a word shall escape me on the subject. But from the speeches made the first night of this debate, and from the speech made by the right hon. gentleman [Sir George Grey] this evening, I deem it my duty to vindicate the conduct pursued by the party with which I act. I say we were perfectly well aware of the great question which it was our business to solve; and I say this now which I would not have said under other circumstances, that I believe that the measure which we brought forward was the only one which has attempted to meet its difficulties. Totally irrespective of other modes of dealing with the question, there were two franchises especially proposed on that occasion which, in my mind, would have done much towards solving them. The first was the franchise founded upon personal property, and the second the franchise founded upon partial occupation. Those two franchises, irrespective of other modes by which we attempted to meet the want and the difficulty—those two franchises, had they been brought into committee of this House, would in my opinion have been so shaped and adapted that they would have effected those objects which the majority of the House desire. We endeavoured in that bill to make proposals which were in the genius of the English constitution. It is easy to speak of the English constitution as a mere phrase. We did not consider the constitution a mere phrase. We knew that the constitution of this country is a monarchy tempered by the authority of co-ordinate estates of the realm. We knew that the House of Commons is an estate of the realm. We knew that an estate of the realm is a political body invested with political power for the government of the country and for the public good, therefore a body founded upon privilege and not upon right. It is therefore in the noblest and properest sense of the word an aristocratic body, and from the first the estate

of the Commons has had that character. From that characteristic the reform bill of 1832 did not derogate; and if at this moment we could contrive, as we proposed to do in 1859, to add considerably to the number of the constituent body, we should not change that characteristic, but it would still remain founded upon an aristocratic principle."

He defended Lord Derby's bill from the strictures passed upon it, and frankly stated that his views as to reform had not altered. "I have not," he said, "changed my opinion upon the subject of what is called parliamentary reform. All that has occurred—all that I have observed—all the results of my reflections lead me to this more and more—that the principle upon which the constituencies of this country should be increased is one not of radical, but, I would say, of lateral reform—the extension of the franchise, not its degradation. Although—I do not wish in any way to deny it—being in the most difficult position when the parliament of 1859 met, being anxious to assist the crown and the parliament by proposing some moderate measure which men on both sides might support, we did to a certain extent agree to some modification of the £10 franchise, yet I confess that my present opinion is opposed, as it originally was, to any course of the kind. I think that it would fail in its object; that it would not secure the introduction of that particular class which we all desire to introduce, but that it would introduce many others who are unworthy of the suffrage. But, sir, I retain these opinions; I think it is possible to increase the electoral body of the country, if the opportunity were favourable and the necessity urgent, by the introduction of voters upon principles in unison with the principles of the constitution, so that the suffrage should remain a privilege, and not a right—a privilege to be gained by virtue, by intelligence, by industry, by integrity, and to be exercised for the common good. And I think if you quit that ground—if you once admit that

every man has a right to vote whom you cannot prove to be disqualified for it, you would change the character of the constitution, and you would change it in a manner which will tend to lower the importance of this country.

"Between the scheme we brought forward and the measure now brought forward by the hon. member for Leeds, and the inevitable conclusion which its principal supporters acknowledge it must lead to, it is a question between an aristocratic government in the proper sense of the term—that is, a government by the best men of all classes—and a democracy. I doubt very much whether a democracy is a government that would suit this country; and it is just as well that the House, when coming to a vote on this question, should really consider if that be the issue—and it is the real issue—between retaining the present constitution—not the present constituent body, but between the present constitution and a democracy—it is just as well for the House to recollect that the stake is not mean—that what is at issue is of some price. You must remember, not to use the epithet profanely, that we are dealing really with a peculiar people. There is no country at the present moment that exists under the circumstances and under the same conditions as the people of this realm. You have, for example, an ancient, powerful, richly-endowed church and perfect religious liberty. You have unbroken order and complete freedom. You have landed estates as large as the Romans, combined with commercial enterprise such as Carthage and Venice united never equalled. And you must remember that this peculiar country, with these strong contrasts, is not governed by force; it is not governed by standing armies; it is governed by a most singular series of traditionary influences, which generation after generation cherishes and preserves because they know that they embalm custom and represent law. And, with this, what have you done? You have created the greatest empire of modern time.

You have amassed a capital of fabulous amount. You have devised and sustained a system of credit still more marvellous. And, above all, you have established and maintained a scheme so vast and complicated of labour and industry, that the history of the world offers no parallel to it. And all these mighty creations are out of all proportion to the essential and indigenous elements and resources of the country. If you destroy that state of society, remember this—England cannot begin again.

“There are countries which have been in great danger and gone through great suffering; the United States, for example, whose fortunes are now so perilous, and who in our own immediate day have had great trials; you have had—perhaps even now in the United States of America you have—a protracted and fratricidal civil war which has lasted for four years; but if it lasted for four years more, vast as would be the disaster and desolation, when ended the United States might begin again, because the United States then would only be in the same condition that England was at the end of the War of the Roses, when probably she had not even 3,000,000 of population, with vast tracts of virgin soil and mineral treasures, not only undeveloped but undreamt of. Then you have France. France had a real revolution in this century—a real revolution; not merely a political, but a social revolution. The institutions of the country were uprooted, the orders of society abolished—even the landmarks and local names removed and erased. But France could begin again. France had the greatest spread of the most exuberant soil in Europe, and a climate not less genial; she had, and always had, comparatively, a limited population, living in a most simple manner. France, therefore, could begin again. But England—the England we know, the England we live in, the England of which we are proud—could not begin again. I do not mean to say that after great troubles England would become a howling wilderness, or doubt that the good sense of the

people would to some degree prevail, and some fragments of the national character survive; but it would not be old England—the England of power and tradition, of credit and capital, that now exists. It is not in the nature of things; and under these circumstances I hope the House, when the question before us is one impeaching the character of our constitution, will hesitate—that it will sanction no step that has a tendency to democracy, but that it will maintain the ordered state of free England in which we live.”

Mr. Disraeli then concluded by stating that the country did not desire any further change in the matter at present. The views on either side as to parliamentary reform were not sufficiently matured. The measure of Mr. Baines would reflect no credit on the House of Commons. It was a mean device, and he thought the house would best do its duty to the country if the measure was rejected by a decided majority. This advice was acted upon. On a division the amendment moved by Lord Elcho was carried by 288 votes against 214. The bill was therefore lost.

The one great subject which interested all members at this time was the approaching general election. There was nothing very important before the moribund House—except the Westbury scandal, in which Mr. Disraeli took no part beyond voting for the resolution of Mr. Ward Hunt*—and members freely absented themselves from St. Stephen's to run down into the country and humour their constituents. It was known that the contest between the two parties would be keen, and men whose

* This was the resolution:—“That the evidence taken before the committee of the House of Lords in the case of Leonard Edmonds, and laid before this House, shows a laxity of practice and a want of caution on the part of the lord chancellor in sanctioning the grant of retiring pensions to public officers over whose heads grave charges are impending, and filling up the vacancies made by the retirement of such officers, whereby great encouragement has been given to corrupt practices; and that such laxity and want of caution, even in the absence of any improper motives, are in the opinion of the House highly reprehensible, and calculated to throw discredit on the administration of the high offices of state.” In consequence of the charges brought against him Lord Westbury resigned July 5, 1866.

seats were insecure regarded the future with trepidation; even those who did not anticipate opposition thought it prudent, by the issue of early addresses and the holding of political meetings, to explain to their supporters the views they held and the course they intended to adopt when returned to the new parliament. The address of Mr. Disraeli was the first (May 20, 1865) in the field. It ran as follows:—

"Although the state of public affairs is on the surface little disturbed, the impending appeal to the country involves consequences as momentous as any recurrence to its sense by the crown has perhaps hitherto offered. The maintenance of a national church involves the question—Whether the principle of religion shall be an element of our political constitution; whether the state shall be consecrated; or whether, dismissing the sanctions that appeal to the higher feelings of man, our scheme of government should degenerate into a mere system of police. I see nothing in such a result but the corruption of nations and the fall of empires. On the extension of the electoral franchise depends, in fact, the distribution of power. It appears to me that the primary plan of our ancient constitution, so rich in various wisdom, indicates the course we ought to pursue in this matter. It secured our popular rights by intrusting power not to an indiscriminate multitude, but to the estate or order of the Commons; and a wise government should be careful that the elements of that estate should bear a due relation to the moral and material development of the country. Public opinion may not perhaps be yet ripe enough to legislate on the subject, but it is sufficiently interested in the question to ponder over it with advantage; so that, when the time comes for action, we may legislate in the spirit of the English constitution, which would absorb the best of every class, and not fall into a democracy, which is the tyranny of one class, and that one the least enlightened. The leaders of the Conserva-

tive party, although they will never shrink from the responsibility of their acts, are not obtrusive candidates for office. Place without power may gratify the vain, but can never satisfy a noble ambition. Who may be the ministers of the queen is an accident of history; what will remain on that enduring page is the policy pursued and its consequences on her realm. That will much depend upon the decision and determination of the constituencies of the United Kingdom in the impending general election."

The issue was soon to be decided. Parliament was dissolved (July 6), and at once addresses were placarded all over the country, and electioneering agents became busy with their canvass. The usual conflicting opinions were entertained as to the advantage to be derived by maintaining the present administration in power. Lord Palmerston thought he might be allowed to say for himself and his colleagues, "that a just judgment of our past administration will entitle us to the same measure of good-will which has been extended to us by the parliament now dissolved." Mr. Bright held a different view, and expressed himself with the temperate frankness and high-bred courtesy which ever characterize him when treating of a rival, or when criticising opinions with which he has no sympathy. "The administration which, in 1859," he said to his constituents, "climbed into office under the pretence of its devotion to the question of parliamentary reform has violated its solemn pledges. Its chiefs have purposely betrayed the cause they undertook to defend, and the less eminent members of it have tamely acquiesced in that betrayal. The ministry have for six years held office, which, but for promises they made, and which they have broken, they could not have obtained possession of even for a day. . . . The parliament is about to expire; the ministry will soon undergo such changes as will make it totter to its fall; but the question of reform lives, and at this moment in the eyes of its opponents

takes a more distinct shape than at any other period since the passing of the bill of 1832. I trust the result of the coming general election will show that, notwithstanding the treachery of official statesmen and the indifference of the expiring parliament, the cause of freedom, based on a true representation of the nation, is advancing with an irresistible force to its final triumph."

A few days later Mr. Bright again alluded to the subject of reform, and at the same time availed himself of the opportunity to make a bitter attack upon Mr. Disraeli. The admirers of Mr. Bright are in the habit of attributing the power and pathos of his eloquence to a diligent study of Holy Writ. Whatever may be the basis upon which the oratory of the member for Birmingham is founded, it is certain that the vindictive spirit of the Old Testament possesses attractions for him which he is not slow to reproduce. "Five millions of grown-up men," he said, "had no direct representation in the House of Commons, in a country whose great foundation of government was a representative system and the representative principle. What was the answer made to this claim? The prime minister answers it by contemptuous silence. He has not referred to it in that long and carefully written address he has issued not only to the electors of Tiverton, but to the electors of the United Kingdom. But what says Lord Derby, speaking through the mouth of his prophet Disraeli? Why, he says, lateral extension of the franchise is what is wanted. He says to the great body of working men—to these five million men—It is true you are shut out; the Reform Bill was not satisfactory; the representation may be amended; your complaint is just, and we will admit—somebody else! Now, Mr. Disraeli is a man of brains, of genius, of a great capacity of action, of a wonderful tenacity of purpose, and of a rare courage. He would have been a statesman if his powers had been directed by any ennobling principle

or idea; but unhappily he prefers a temporary and worthless distinction as the head of a decaying party, fighting for impossible ends, to the priceless memories of services rendered to his country and to freedom, upon which only in our age an enduring fame can be built up. The 'fancy franchise' has failed. The lateral extension will also fail; we who advocate honest, open, clearly understood, and definite measures—we shall succeed." It is always amusing to recall predictions delivered in the most confident manner, which have been completely falsified. The advice of the American humorist is very sound, "Never prophesy unless you know."

The members for Buckinghamshire were returned without opposition. On the day of his election (July 13, 1865) Mr. Disraeli delivered a somewhat lengthy address to his constituents. He confined himself chiefly to two points—the necessity for a reform in the representation, and the dangers which menaced religion by the attempts to sever the union between church and state. On these two subjects he repeated what he had already frequently said in the House of Commons and on the platform at clerical meetings, and we may therefore dispense with fully recording his observations. He confessed himself an uncompromising and conscientious upholder of the Church of England. "Here you find," he said, "a powerful, learned, and wealthy corporation, the Church of England, which formerly was independent of the state, but which in time became allied to it. In its alliance with the state it acknowledges the supremacy of the crown, which I trust never will be lessened, for it is one of the key-stones of our liberty, civil as well as religious. You have this great corporation, which, while it has supplied the want consistently with the enjoyment of religious liberty by every subject of the state—at the same time providing spiritual instruction for all the subjects of Her Majesty—holds a position of independence that most favourably distinguishes it from the position of priest-

hoods which are salaried servants of the state, thus combining, as it were, toleration and orthodoxy, and giving to our institutions the consecrating character of religious connection. And it is proved that its existence is quite consistent with the ample and complete enjoyment of religious liberty by every one of Her Majesty's subjects." Then passing on to financial matters he criticised the last budget of Mr. Gladstone. He approved of the reductions effected by the chancellor of the exchequer, but he could not congratulate him on his originality. The budget had been much lauded because it reduced the duty on tea and lowered the income tax; yet in 1852 it was Mr. Disraeli who was the first to grapple with tea duties; and as for the income tax, when Mr. Disraeli quitted office he left that tax at the lowest rate it had ever stood at. He was very humorous as to what Mr. Gladstone had done with the terminable annuities.

"What had become of them," he asked? "Nobody knows," he replied. "It has been kept a profound secret; but as parliament has been dissolved I will tell you. It was a most wonderful thing. Parliament was assembled, the House was very full, as it always is when Mr. Gladstone is going to make a great speech or to perform some considerable feat. We knew that he was going to perform some considerable feat that night. He had £2,200,000 of taxation which was dying a natural death. It was a fund to which Englishmen had been looking for relief for half a century. There was not a sore or distressed interest in the country which did not say to itself, 'Ecod, when these terminable annuities fall in we shall have a chance.' The men who paid income tax said, 'Well, Peel took us in about that; he told us we should only have it for four years, and now it's increased, but there is an end to the longest lane, and when those terminable annuities fall in we shall have a good cut at the income tax.' My friend thought that the malt-tax payers would get a chance. Well, what did Mr. Gladstone do with them? It

was a feat of legerdemain which exceeded any conjuring of M. Robert. He took one million and turned it into ducks, then he took another million and turned it into drakes, and for half an hour these ducks and drakes flew cackling about the House of Commons, until at last we got ashamed of one another, and we ordered strangers to withdraw, and determined to keep it a profound secret until parliament was dissolved."

He did not, continued Mr. Disraeli, consider the commercial prosperity of the country so sound as many imagined. [The failures that followed one after the other in the ensuing year only proved how correct had been the estimate formed on this point by Mr. Disraeli.] As regards the treaty of commerce with France, the Liberals had been congratulated upon the policy they had introduced; yet that policy had not been originated by them, but only borrowed from their rivals. More than twenty years ago he himself had strongly advocated the signing of a treaty of commerce with France to relieve the distress of the country,* but his views were treated with contempt by the free-traders then in the House. Again, when Lord Derby was in power in 1852,

* During the debate upon the distress of the country (February 14, 1843) Mr. Disraeli warmly advocated the entering into a treaty of commerce with France in a speech which Mr. Morley—surely no favourable critic of Conservative suggestions—in his biography of Mr. Cobden, describes as "remarkable to this day for its large and comprehensive survey of the whole field of our commerce, and for its discernment of the channels in which it would expand." "Sign the treaty of commerce with France," cried Mr. Disraeli, "and that will give present relief. A treaty of commerce between England and France will do more for the town of Sheffield than both the Americas." To those who objected to treaties of commerce he said, "Why, the commerce of the world has been created by conventions—they were commercial treaties which first secured the persons and property of merchants." Again, "In forming connections with the states of Europe it was obvious that we could only proceed by negotiations. Diplomacy, stepped in to weigh and adjust contending interests, to obtain mutual advantages and ascertain reciprocal equivalents. Our commerce with Europe could only be maintained and extended by treaties." For a Conservative, who based his commercial policy upon protection or reciprocity, there was no inconsistency in advocating commercial treaties with any country which would agree to exchange its goods for ours, since the very principle of a treaty of commerce is reciprocity. Mr. Disraeli did not object to commercial treaties, but he strongly objected to Liberals who had always been vaunting the advantages of "unrestricted competition" having recourse to negotiations which were carried on in direct violation of the principles of free trade.

one of the first actions of the Conservative government was to establish a treaty of commerce with France, and the negotiations only proved abortive because the government of Lord Derby were compelled by the factious conduct of the Opposition to resign their offices. What then became, he concluded, of the loud praises sung in honour of Liberal finance? The treaty of commerce with France, the reduction of the duties on tea, the lowering of the income tax, and the reduction of the public expenditure were all schemes originally proposed by the Conservative party, and now coolly advocated by the Liberals amid the applause of the nation. "In fact," said Mr. Disraeli, "the whole thing has been a genteel imposture from beginning to end, and if the 'parties,' as the phrase has it, did not move in eminent circles and occupy a distinguished position in life, they would have been taken before the lord mayor and punished for obtaining applause under false pretences."

The result of the election was in favour of the Liberals. In the city of London four Liberals were chosen. In Westminster Mr. John Stuart Mill, who held very advanced opinions upon the subject of reform, was returned at the head of the poll. Lambeth also showed its preference for Liberal opinions. The University of Oxford, however, declined to have anything any more to do with its member, and Mr. Gladstone began the pilgrimage he has since had to continue in search of a constituency by successfully appealing to the voters of North Lancashire. Of the 657 members returned to the new parliament 367 were described as Liberals, and 290 as Conservatives. In the change the Liberals lost 33 seats and gained 57. Liberalism, it was said, was henceforth to be dominant, and by the verdict of the country had entered upon a new lease of power. All the abuses so long complained of were now to be removed—parliament was to be reformed, church rates were to be abolished, the Protestant Church in Ireland was to be severed

from any connection with the state, vote by ballot was to become law, the land laws were to be remodelled, and, in fact, the programme of the extreme Liberal party was to be carried through without any omissions. A few of the advanced Radicals believed that the political millennium was about to be ushered in, and that the House of Lords was to be abolished, the Church of England disestablished, our colonies cast off, India handed over to her inhabitants, our naval and military establishments reduced to complete inefficiency, and the land bought up by the state to be divided among the people. There was now, it was triumphantly asserted, no obstacle to the development of Liberalism and the progress of revolutionary principles. The Conservative party was in a minority; Lord Palmerston was dying; Mr. Gladstone, since his rejection by his university, had owned that he was "unmuzzled"—a liberation which of course offered him greater facilities for eating his former words; Mr. Bright, who had hitherto been the representative of isolated opposition, was now in the new House of Commons, for the first time in his life, to develop into a formidable power in the House. Mr. Mill was also there, whilst those of the party who would have checked the republican ardour of advanced Liberalism—Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, Sir George Lewis, and others—had passed away from the scenes of political strife. It is not surprising that in the autumn of 1865 the Liberals were sanguine and confident. With Mr. Gladstone "unmuzzled" and leader of the Lower House, with Mr. Bright a power in the state, and with Mr. Mill, who "would open the suffrage to all grown persons, both men and women, who can read, write, and perform a sum in the rule of three, and who have not within some small number of years received parish relief," to what heights might not the Liberals soar—or, to speak more correctly, to what

* "At last, my friends, I am come among you—and I am come, to use an expression which has become very famous, and is not likely to be forgotten, I am come among you 'unmuzzled.'"—*Mr. Gladstone at Manchester, July 18, 1865.*

depths might they not sink now that they were masters of the situation?

During the recess several events occurred of great importance, and some of which led to future parliamentary discussion. The cattle disease, commonly called the *rinderpest*, had broken out, and had advanced with such rapid strides throughout the country that a commission had been appointed to investigate the origin and nature of the disease, and to ascertain the mode of treatment best adapted for the cure of the infected animals, and for the prevention of the spread of the malady. In spite, however, of all precautions, the plague still continued its devastating progress, and during the autumn and winter mutton and beef advanced 20 per cent. above the rates of recent years. Another event which caused considerable anxiety also appeared at this time. Certain discontented Irish had formed themselves into a "Fenian Society," and, aided by funds from America, resolved to create a rebellion against the government, and sever Ireland from English rule. "The object of the leaders of this society," said Mr. Justice Keogh, "was to extend it through all classes of the people, but especially the artisans in towns and the cultivators of the soil; its ramifications existed not only in this country, but in the States of America; supplies of money and of arms for the purposes of a general insurrection were being collected not only here but on the other side of the Atlantic; and finally, the object of this confederation was the overthrow of the queen's authority, the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, the destruction of our present constitution, the establishment of some democratic or military despotism, and the general division of every description of property, as the result of a successful civil war." Happily, by the vigilance of Lord Wodehouse, the viceroy, the scheme was promptly, if not suppressed, at least considerably interfered with and thwarted. The conductors of the seditious press, which had been hounding on the ignorant Irish

to open resistance by their ribald and inflammatory articles, were arrested and imprisoned. A raid was made upon the Fenians in the various disaffected districts, and they were soon safely housed in the gaols of the country. Every precaution was taken to crush insurrection the moment it attempted to rear its evil head. The constabulary was increased, the military force in the island was strengthened, the public buildings were strongly guarded by police, and the penalties of the law were severely meted out to all who had been found guilty of traitorous designs. Before the year closed the arrest of a man called Stephens, termed in the language of the Fenian party "the head centre," inflicted a blow upon Irish disaffection which rendered its further efforts for a time more irritating than dangerous; but it soon recovered itself, and subsequently assumed such dangerous proportions as to necessitate the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Across the Atlantic a graver revolt against English authority had burst forth, which, if not instantaneously checked, might have led to the most dangerous consequences. During the last few years the negroes in Jamaica, stimulated by the suggestions of the native Baptist ministers, a mischievous and disloyal class, had on various occasions openly expressed their discontent at the manner in which the island was governed. The smouldering disaffection only required an opportunity to burst forth into the flame of revolt. An occasion offered itself. Early in October a body of negroes marched down to Morant Bay to rescue a comrade about to be put on his trial for some trifling offence. A conflict ensued between the authorities and the negroes, and it eventually became necessary for the custos of the district to issue warrants for the apprehension of the more prominent of the rioters. Among these was one Paul Bogle, who, when the police were endeavouring to take him into custody, was surrounded by a body of armed blacks, who beat off the constables and compelled them

to swear that they would act against the government. A more formidable encounter now followed upon this proceeding in the square of the court-house at Morant Bay, the rebels easily defeating the few volunteers present, and then setting fire to the building. A murderous onslaught was now made on the defenceless white people of the district by the infuriated negroes, who were goaded on to inflict the most terrible atrocities upon helpless English women and children by the fiendish encouragement of Paul Bogle. "Skin for skin!" he cried; "the iron bars is now broken in this parish; the white people send a proclamation to the governor to make war against us, which we all must put our shoulders to the wheels and pull together. The Maroons sent the proclamation to meet them at Hayfield at once without delay, that they will put us in a way how to act. Every one of you must leave your house, take your guns; who don't have guns take your cutlasses down at once. Come over to Stony Gut, that we might march over to meet the Maroons at once without delay. Blow your shells! roll your drums; house to house take out every man; march them down to Stony Gut; any that you find take them in the way; take them down with their arms; war is at us, my black skins; war is at hand from to-day till to-morrow. Every black man must turn at once, for the oppression is too great; the white people are now cleaning up their guns for us, which we must prepare to meet them too. Cheer, men, cheer! in heart we looking for you a part of the night or before daybreak."

Upon intelligence of this revolt reaching Spanish Town, Governor Eyre, with the most commendable promptitude, at once proceeded to deal out such measures as would strike terror into the craven but brutal negroes, and prevent the insurrection spreading further into the island. It was one of those occasions when a firm and despotic policy has immediately to be enforced, if authority is to prevail over the

opposition of the semi-savage. To the hands of the governor of Jamaica were intrusted the lives and property of the whites, the honour of Englishwomen, and the protection of little children; and had he hesitated in the course he pursued, the island would have fallen an easy prey to the rebel blacks, whose barbarous instincts, once aroused, can only be crushed by a punishment as fierce and vindictive as it is instantaneous. To the negro—the lowest human being in the scale of creation—kindness, persuasion, and the rest of the moral influences are all thrown away during seasons of grave crisis; his vanity and ignorance but interpret them as so many signs of weakness and fear. Yet no one better than he understands and appreciates the opposition that supports its resistance by a free use of shot and sabre, by the punishment of the gallows, and by the terrors of vigorous scourging. Governor Eyre well knew the class of men with whom he had to deal—how swiftly the revolt would spread if weakness on the part of the authorities was apparent—how easily it could be crushed beneath an iron rule; and he chose to sacrifice the blacks, and to teach them a lesson they should long remember, rather than put in jeopardy for one moment the honour and welfare of the white population placed under his protection. As Cromwell had ruled Ireland, so Eyre now proceeded to rule Jamaica.

Troops were despatched by sea to Morant Bay; with the exception of the city of Kingston, the whole county of Surrey was placed under martial law; and punishment swiftly followed upon the verdict of guilty. When authority and rebellion come into conflict, and passion is at fever heat, there will be much in the efforts made in the cause of subjugation that must occasion regret. History has never yet had to record the rise, progress, and suppression of revolt, without having had occasion to express shame and remorse at the course often pursued by power to regain its lawful authority. "Bulgarian atrocities" stare us

in the face as we turn over page after page which describes how country after country has treated rebellion and stamped it out. In that passionate hour authority often declines to trouble itself with the justice that is tempered with mercy, with the parade of precedents, or as to the decision which vengeance more often than equity arrives at. All that it then cares about is to adopt the speediest means to crush the insurrection and to bring the leaders to punishment. It is to the end only it looks; the condemnation of the means it leaves to others. Afterwards, when the danger is past, when disaffection has been successfully suppressed, and when order and security once more reign supreme, then it is that the self-constituted critic, uninfluenced by the passions of the moment, and miles away from the scene of peril, calmly reviews the whole of the proceedings, and visits with his sternest condemnation the needless penalties that have been inflicted, and the hasty and vindictive fashion in which the law has been strained.

Such was the case with the suppression of the Jamaica insurrection. A turbulent and narrow-minded party at home, forgetful that the promptitude of the governor had saved the colony, remembered only how severe had been the floggings, how unjust had been several of the punishments, and how the guiltless had been made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. A fierce outcry arose against Governor Eyre, and the feeling led to more than one exciting debate in the House of Commons. One case especially attracted considerable attention. Among the members of the House of Assembly—the representative chamber of Jamaica—was a coloured man with enough education to be mischievous and enough property to be important. His name was George William Gordon, and he combined the two callings—not unknown even in this country—of Baptist minister and political agitator. On the Sabbath he denounced the Enemy of all mankind, and on week-days he

denounced the English government. He was evidently a very seditious, a very active, and a very unscrupulous personage, with all the conceit and ignorance of the Dissenting divine, and all the fussy importance and culpable interference of the popular demagogue. He was discovered to be the chief agent of the insurrection, and brought to punishment. "I found everywhere," wrote Governor Eyre, "the most unmistakable evidence that George William Gordon, a coloured member of the House of Assembly, had not only been mixed up in the matter, but was himself, through his own misrepresentation and seditious language addressed to the ignorant black people, the chief cause and origin of the whole rebellion. Mr. Gordon was now in Kingston, and it became necessary to decide what action should be taken with regard to him. Having obtained a deposition on oath that certain seditious printed notices had been sent through the post office, directed in his handwriting, to the parties who had been leaders in the rebellion, I at once called upon the custos to issue a warrant and capture him. For some little time he managed to evade capture, but finding that sooner or later it was inevitable, he proceeded to the house of General O'Connor and there gave himself up. I at once had him placed on board the *Wolverine* for safe custody and conveyance to Morant Bay." He was tried by court-martial there, and hanged on the morning of the 23rd. "I have seen," wrote Eyre, "the proceedings of the court, and concur both in the justice of the sentence and the policy of carrying it out."

Unfortunately there were certain circumstances connected with this trial which gave the enemies of Eyre an opportunity for attack. Gordon had been arrested in Kingston, where martial law did not prevail; yet, contrary to all justice, he was removed to Morant Bay, then under martial law, and there tried and sentenced. If he had been guilty of rebellion he should have, as a native of Kingston, been tried

in that city by the civil law and accorded all the precaution and deliberation which that law affords. It also appears that the tribunal which sentenced Gordon to death was composed of young and consequently inexperienced men; that evidence was received which should not have been accepted; that though Gordon was an agitator, and therefore indirectly connected with the revolt, there was nothing to prove that he directly planned the late insurrection; and that he was hanged with the most indecent haste. Such a perversion of justice was not permitted to escape comment. By the greater portion of the Liberals, and by all the Dissenting interest, Eyre was most virulently abused, and all the vocabulary of detraction was exhausted by his opponents whenever his name and character came up for discussion. The steps taken by the governor to crush the revolt were warmly approved of by the colony; but the government at home, intimidated by the rage of the Dissenters, resolved to suspend Eyre until some inquiry had been made as to the character and extent of the outbreak.

Towards the close of the year Sir Henry Storks was sent out as temporary governor of Jamaica, and with him were despatched Mr. Russell Gurney, the recorder of London, and Mr. J. B. Maule, the recorder of Leeds, as commissioners to investigate into the recent disturbances. Let us anticipate a few months, and give the result of the inquiry. Briefly, it was as follows:—That the disturbances had their immediate origin in a planned resistance to lawful authority; that the causes of the insurgents rebelling were, (1) to obtain land free from the payment of rent, (2) the want of confidence generally felt by the labouring class in the tribunals before which most of the disputes affecting their interests were carried for adjudication, and (3) the wish to attain their ends by the death or expulsion of the white inhabitants of the island; *that such was the excitement of the island, that had the insurgents obtained more than a*

momentary success, their ultimate overthrow would have been attended with a still more fearful loss of life and property; that praise was due to Governor Eyre, to whose skill, promptitude, and vigour the speedy termination of the rebellion was in a great degree to be attributed; that the military and naval operations were prompt and judicious; that by the continuance of martial law in its full force the people were deprived for longer than necessary of their constitutional privileges; that the punishments inflicted were excessive; the punishment of death unnecessarily frequent; the floggings reckless; and that the burning of 1000 houses was wanton and cruel.

On the publication of this report the Liberals became the prey of the fiercest indignation, and resolved upon adopting vindictive measures. An association was formed to prosecute the ex-governor of Jamaica, who was now openly accused of the murder of Mr. Gordon. The Liberals were, however, not to have it all their own way; and the friends of the much-abused man now came forward, and an "Eyre defence fund" was started. Mr. Carlyle, in offering his name to be placed on the committee, thus spoke of the victim of Liberal fanaticism:—"All the light that has yet reached me on Mr. Eyre, and his history in the world, goes steadily to establish the conclusion that he is a *just, humane, and valiant man*, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty for executing them; that his late services in Jamaica were of great, perhaps of incalculable value, as certainly they were of perilous and appalling difficulty. . . . Penalty and clamour are not the things the governor merits from any of us, but honour and thanks and wise imitation, should similar emergencies arise, on the great scale or on the small, in whatever we are governing. The English nation have never loved anarchy, nor was wont to spend its sympathy on miserable mad seditions, especially of this inhuman and half-brutish type, but always loved order

and the prompt suppression of seditions, and reserved its tears for something worthier than the promoters of such delirious and fatal enterprises, who had got their wages for their sad industry. . . . I do at once feel that, as a British citizen, I should and must make you welcome to my name for your committee, and to whatever good it can do you; with the hope only that many other British men, of far more significance in such a matter, will at once or gradually do the like; and that in fine, by wise effort and persistence, a blind and disgraceful act of public injustice may be prevented, and an egregious folly as well—not to say, for none can say or compute, what a vital detriment throughout the British empire in such an example set to all the colonies and governors the British empire has.”

This hope was realized. In spite of the rabid attacks on Mr. Eyre by Mr. Bright at Radical assemblies, and of the “bray” of the Baptists in Exeter Hall, the sound common sense of the English people declined to be led astray. The ex-governor of Jamaica, after much delay and agitation, was brought up before the Queen’s Bench; but the grand jury, after a long consultation, returned a verdict of No Bill. Nor were the proceedings against the agents of Mr. Eyre a whit more successful. The brigadier-general of Jamaica, and the president of the court-martial upon Gordon, were arrested and committed for trial on a charge of wilful murder. The lord chief-justice, in an exhaustive summing up, laid down the lines upon which the grand jury were to base their verdict. Mr. Eyre was “fully entitled and empowered to proclaim martial law.” Though the legality of Gordon’s arrest might be questionable, yet the tribunal which passed sentence upon him had not to deal with that matter; the only question for that tribunal was “whether, being in fact within the jurisdiction of martial law, Gordon was or was not liable to be tried.” Sir Alexander Cockburn then stated that though “the evidence on which

Gordon was convicted by the military tribunal was such that no civil judge in England could have held to be legally sufficient, yet if the military judges having, as they had, jurisdiction acted honestly and *bona fide* on the belief that this evidence proved the man’s guilt, that exonerated them.” The grand jury accepted this sensible interpretation of the case, and threw out the bill.

But attracting far more attention than either the cattle plague or the progress of the Jamaica revolt was an event which, long expected, now took place. Death had been busy during the last few years in the ranks of the political world, and its icy hand was now to close over and remove one of the most prominent men of the century. Lord Palmerston had for some time past been in feeble health. His eyesight was failing, he suffered from repeated attacks of the gout, and he had of late been forced to absent himself frequently from parliament. He had been a member of the House for nearly sixty years, but men were so accustomed to his presence in their midst that gradually they looked upon him as immortal, and could hardly bring themselves to consider a House of Commons without him. Ever since the Tiverton election, he had been compelled to regard himself as almost a prisoner. About the middle of October he caught a severe cold, and it was reported in town that he was sinking. He was spared the suffering of a lingering death. After an illness of four days he passed peacefully away. He was buried with all public honours in Westminster Abbey, and his death was widely and genuinely regretted. Whatever were his faults they were those which were easily pardoned by the nation, for they proceeded from the vigour and purity of his patriotism. His foreign policy, which had led to so many debates in Parliament, was only another proof of his love for England. Throughout his long and faithful service to the state his one object was to uphold English interests, to jealously

maintain the prestige of England, and on all necessary occasions to assert the authority and influence of England. It was this intense love of England which often caused him to interfere in foreign complications where such interference was uncalled for; it seemed to him almost like slighting his country for any foreign affairs to be settled without English advice and co-operation.

Of all our statesmen he was essentially the most English. His tastes, his prejudices, his ideas were all typical of the nation, of which he was the best representative of his day. To him England was the first and greatest country in the world; her men the bravest and most accomplished; her women the handsomest; her commerce the most prosperous; her resources the most fertile; her opulence the most marked. Among all classes he was popular. To the people he was not so much the experienced statesman, powerful in debate and the leader of cabinets, as he was a thorough English gentleman, a kind landlord, a good judge of horseflesh, fond of all manly sports, and the man who often gained his ends by a joke or a jaunty saying where the dull scholar and the heavy legislator would have failed. In parliament he was much regarded. His social position and knowledge of the world had their due effect; without being an orator he was an easy and practised speaker; his tact in managing men was exquisite; and his honour and good faith were never held in doubt. Able, genial, industrious, fond of what his class liked and hating what it disliked, he will be remembered on our list of premiers as he himself would have wished to be remembered—not as the greatest, but as the most English of our statesmen.

"It is impossible to deny," said Mr. Disraeli on the meeting of parliament, in allusion to the loss the country had sustained by the death of Lord Palmerston, "that the disappearance of such a character from the scene—of so much sagacity, of so much experience, and, I may

say, of so much fame—must in some degree, and for some time, derogate from the authority even of the House of Commons. But, sir, it is not on this occasion that I wish to refer to the character of a great statesman, but rather to the happy disposition of the man, which lent, indeed, a charm to the labours and anxieties of public life. By his good temper and good sense he facilitated the course of public business beyond what it is easy to ascertain, or even perhaps to imagine. I am sure it must be the general sentiment among us, that the influence over our debates will not soon cease of his genial experience and his moderating wisdom."

A few days later (February 22, 1866), on the occasion of the motion brought forward by Mr. Gladstone, that a monument be erected to the memory of Lord Palmerston in Westminster Abbey, Mr. Disraeli seconded the suggestion in a few well-chosen words. He hoped, he began, that the motion would have been seconded by some one who had had the honour of sharing the private friendship of Lord Palmerston, and at the same time had enjoyed his political confidence. Still, as no one had risen, he could not without great reluctance permit a proposal of such a character to pass in absolute silence, and let it appear as if the Conservative party did not assent to the motion with entire cordiality. "Whatever differences of opinion," he said, "there may be on political questions, the memory of sixty years of public service—always distinguished, sometimes illustrious—cannot be allowed to be cherished merely by an admiring or even a grateful country. It is under such circumstances most fitting and most proper that in the chief sanctuary of the realm there should be some outward and visible sign to preserve the memory of a statesman of whom it may be said that he combined in the highest degree two qualities which we seldom find united—energy and experience. I will not touch upon the personal qualities of the man. In this present Parliament I have already presumed to

speaking of them ; I will only say that they were most engaging. I trust that the time may never come when the love of fame shall cease to be the sovereign passion of our public men. But I still think that states-
man is peculiarly to be envied who, when he leaves us, leaves not merely the memory of great achievements, but also the tender tradition of personal affection and social charm."

END OF VOL. I.

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